A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF ETHNIC-RACIAL IDENTITY AND ACCULTURATION AS BUFFERS AGAINST DISCRIMINATION AMONG MUSLIM IMMIGRANTS FROM THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA IN THE UNITED STATES

by

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A Thesis
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A Systematic Review of Ethnic-Racial Identity and Acculturation as Buffers against Discrimination among Muslim Immigrants from the Middle East and North Africa in the United States

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DEDICATION

This is dedicated to my loving parents Magda and Abdelrazig, and my two wonderful sisters Ruba and Esra.

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I would like to thank the many friends, relatives, and supporters who have made this happen. Drs. Kornienko, Adams, and Kim were of invaluable help. I would also like to thank my undergraduate research assistant, Hira Ikram, and a special thanks to my labmate, Marissa Davila, for her support and encouragement throughout the past two years.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page
List of Tables vii
List of Figures viii
List of Abbreviations ix
Abstract x
INTRODUCTION 1
Framework for understanding risk and resilience among immigrant youth 2
Study goals 3
Defining the population of interest 4
Socio-historical context of MENA in the United States 5
Muslim Identification and Islamophobia in the United States 6
Ethnicity, Race, and Ethnic Racial Identity 8
Developmental Process of Ethnic Racial Identity in Ethnic Youth 9
Promotive and Protective Effects of Ethnic Racial Identity against Discrimination 11
The Role of Acculturation in Immigrant Youth Development 14
Acculturation Strategies 15
The Impact of Discrimination on Acculturation Strategies 16
Promotive and Protective Effects of Acculturation against Discrimination 18
METHODS 22
Search Strategy 22
Alternative Search Strategy 23
Inclusion Criteria 23
Exclusion Coding 23
Study Selection 24
RESULTS 26
Descriptive Overview of Studies 31
Measures of Discrimination 32

Measurement of Ethnic Racial Identity 33
Relationship between Ethnic Racial Identity and Psychological Outcomes 35
Measurement of Acculturation 35
Relationship between Acculturation and Psychological Outcomes 37
DISCUSSION 39
Ethnic-racial identity 41
Promotive effects 44
Protective effects 44
Acculturation 45
Promotive effects 48
Protective effects 49
Additional risk and resources 50
Country of Origin: Middle East vs. North Africa 50
Age and gender 51
Generational status 52
LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS 53
CONCLUSION 56
References 57

LIST OF TABLES

Table Page
Table 1. Descriptive characteristics of studies included in final review 27
Table 2. Overview of final studies included in review.....29

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure Page
Figure 1. Conceptual model depicting the relationship between ERI, discrimination, and psychological health 20
Figure 2. Conceptual model depicting the relationship between acculturation, discrimination, and psychological health 21
Figure 3. PRISMA diagram detailing the article screening process 25

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Ethnic-racial identity ..... ERI
Middle Eastern and North African ..... MENA

ABSTRACT

A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF ETHNIC-RACIAL IDENTITY AND ACCULTURATION AS BUFFERS AGAINST DISCRIMINATION AMONG MUSLIM IMMIGRANTS FROM THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA IN THE UNITED STATES

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In much of the literature on identity development, there is a strong emphasis on the process of exploration and commitment, ultimately leading to attaining a stage of identity achievement. Little is known about these processes among MENA (Middle Eastern and North African) emerging adults (ages 18-25) and, specifically, how stigma and negative public regard influence their desire to engage in ethnic-racial identity (ERI) exploration processes. Although immigrants from MENA countries might encounter stigma and discrimination associated with their culture and religion, research has shown that each of ERI exploration and resolution has promotive and protective effects on psychological adjustment of diverse youth (e.g., Umaña-Taylor, 2016; Yip, 2018; Yip et al., 2019). This study seeks to (1) examine the promotive and protective roles of ERI and acculturation against the adverse effects of discrimination on psychological adjustment and (2)

consider group differences as a function of region, age, gender, and generational status. These research questions were examined using the systematic review and reporting guidelines providing by the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA; Moher, Liberati, Tetzlaff, Altman, & The PRISMA Group, 2009). Results revealed significant effect for both promotive and protective role of ERI and the protective role of acculturation. Additionally, this study found a scarcity of information regarding group differences as a function of geographic region, age, gender, and generational status. In sum, this review highlights the continued need for studies focusing on Muslim-MENA youth to better understand the normative development of ERI, acculturation processes, and their role in psychological adaptation. Once these processes are further investigated, future studies can begin to examine how to promote positive development in the Muslim-MENA community.

INTRODUCTION

The United States has seen a 1,600% increase in hate-based incidents against persons perceived to be Arab, Muslim, or South Asian between 2000 and 2001 (Naber, 2000). Experiences of discrimination in Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) communities continue to be a prevalent issue that leads to several negative developmental implications such as the disruption of normative ethnic-racial identity (ERI) development, which has been found to have both promotive and protective effect for minority group mental health (Yip, 2018).

In addition to having a greater risk for experiences of discrimination, relatively little is known about the normative process of ERI development among MENA youth. Older generations of research have focused on understanding the development of MENA youth by focusing on religious or Muslim *identification*, which is the status of being Muslim, rather than a multi-dimensional nature of *identity*. More recently, developmental research has been focusing on examining the multi-dimensional nature of identity while focusing on the content and process aspects of the developmental process (Umaña-Taylor, Quintana, Lee, Cross Jr, Rivas-Drake, Schwartz, ... & Ethnic and Racial Identity in the 21st Century Study Group, 2014). Given the increase in negative societal perceptions of Muslim-identifying individuals, more recent and developmentally grounded work focuses on the developmental as well as social-psychological components

in these communities (Awad, Kia-Keating, & Amer, 2019). Another important dimension of MENA youth development is acculturation. Successful acculturation, defined as integration into the host society, has been found to have positive effects such as increased satisfaction with life (Al Wekhian, 2016). However, this successful integration into the United States is becoming increasing difficult for these individuals given the anti-Arab and Anti-Muslim rhetoric that has become increasingly relevant in recent years (Al Wekhian, 2016).

Framework for understanding risk and resilience among immigrant youth

The present examination of MENA youth development and the role of identity and cultural processes are guided by a recently articulated integrative framework for understanding risk and resilience among immigrant youth (Suárez-Orozco, Motti-Stefanidi, Marks, and Katsiaficas, 2018). Given the increased prevalence of immigrant-origin children around the globe, Suárez-Orozco and colleagues (2018) provided a needed integration of prominent frameworks in the field of developmental psychology, acculturation, and psychological adjustment to identify sources of risk and resilience for immigrant-origin children and youth. This integrative model also acknowledges external factors that may present an obstacle to immigrant youth development as well as inform the decision to migrate. These additional factors unique to immigrant youth include, but are not limited to, attitudes toward immigrants, national and state immigration policies, and refugee and asylum-seeker resettlement programs (Suárez-Orozco et al, 2018). The integrative risk and resilience model highlights the need to consider the interaction

between the individual, their microsystem, immigration context, and global forces to promote the positive adaptation of immigrant-origin youth.

Suárez-Orozco and colleagues (2018) conceptualize the relationship between acculturation and ERI in their integrative risk and resilience model as an individually unique process that is impacted differently depending on the host country. In their model, immigrant-origin children and youth are faced with acculturative and enculturative tasks which vary as a function of the context of socialization and the standard for adapting in the host culture. *Acculturation* refers to the process of adopting the culture of the receiving community, whereas *enculturation* refers to the process of practicing the cultural traditions of the culture of origin. Within the framework identity development falls under both acculturation and enculturation processes because the construction of a strong national identity and maintenance of a secure ethnic identity is essential to well-being in immigrant-origin children and youth (Suárez-Orozco, Motti-Stefanidi, Marks, & Katsiaficas, 2018). Guided by this integrative model, the present study adopts a top-down approach to understand how global forces, political, and socio-historical contexts of immigrant reception impact individual-level differences in the development of ERI and psychological adjustment.

Study goals

The goals of this study are to conduct a systematic review of existing quantitative research on the promotive and protective role of ERI development and acculturation for MENA immigrants in the United States. In accomplishing these goals, the present study

seeks to examine how the promotive and protective effects of ERI development and acculturation vary as a function of region, age, gender, and generational status.

The ensuing sections will provide an overview of the socio-historical context shaping MENA youth development and adjustment in the United States, followed by a discussion on the distinction between Muslim and Arab identification. Next, the processes of ERI development and acculturation in MENA populations will be discussed in the context of normative developmental processes as well as how they are implicated by experiences of discrimination. Finally, the promotive and protective role of ERI and acculturation processes will be addressed.

Defining the population of interest

To understand MENA immigrant development in the United States it is important to first consider the diversity and differences that exist between and within the Middle Eastern and North African regions. Because MENA is a geographically defined term that refers to the region from Morocco to Iran this review will focus on countries that are members of the Arab League. This organization's membership was of interest to this study because it was founded on shared culture and a common language of Arabic (Toffolo, 2008). These countries include Algeria, Bahrain, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen. Many international organizations such as the World Bank also define these countries as MENA.

Individuals from the MENA region may identify as *Arab* which refers to a group of people that come from the MENA region, speak Arabic, and share common cultural values and historical experiences (Toffolo, 2008). *Muslim* individuals are followers of Islam and although a majority of Arabs are Muslim, most Muslims are not Arabs (Toffolo, 2008). Although *Arab* and *Muslim* are common identities found among members of the Arab League these are by no means all-inclusive. There are many different ethnic and religious identities that differentially impact individuals' experiences in their country of origin as well as their lived experiences within the United States.

Socio-historical context of MENA in the United States

The circumstances that led individuals to immigrate significantly impacts their ability to assimilate into society. Historically there have been two distinct waves of immigration into the United States from MENA countries that are distinguished by the immigrant's intentions and goals as well as the circumstances of their country of origin. In 1916 the first wave of immigrants came primarily from Syria and Lebanon and they practiced Christianity (Naber, 2000). These individuals came intending to work to acquire wealth and eventually return to their country of origin (Naber, 2000). Because the first wave of immigrants did not have the intention to permanently reside in America, little effort was made to integrate into society. However, because of several commonalities such as similar religious ideologies and phenotypic characteristics this first wave of immigrants was able to incorporate themselves into society without having to completely assimilate.

In the 1940s the second wave of immigrants included a greater number of individuals from all over the MENA region. In comparison to the first wave the second

wave of immigrants was predominately comprised of individuals that practiced Islam and also individuals that were displaced by wars, most notably the 1948 Palestine War (Naber, 2000). With the increase of conflict in the Arab world more individuals were being displaced and came to America to seek refuge. Because of their circumstances the second wave of Arab immigrants was motivated by their desire for safety and so similar to the first wave's mindset there was not much thought put into figuring out how to incorporate themselves into American society. Because the predominant religion of the second wave was Islam and also because of the diversity of phenotypic appearance, the second wave had more difficulty adjusting to their new environment.

Muslim Identification and Islamophobia in the United States

It is important to clarify the difference between religious and ethnic-racial identification in MENA communities because, not only do they serve as promotive factors, but they also represent potential dimensions for discrimination (Awad, 2010; Yip, 2018). Older generations of research on psychological and developmental processes in MENA youth have used religious identification to determine whether these communities are attributing their experiences of discrimination to their religion or another identity factor and to examine the effect of perceived discrimination on self-identification (Awad, 2010; Cashin, 2010). Since the attacks of 9/11, Islam became more prevalently associated with terrorism and this association continued in the years to follow (Cashin, 2010). Discrimination against Arabs and Muslims existed before the 9/11 attacks. However, the war on terror has resulted in a spike of increased experiences of discrimination, negative public opinion, and overall stigma (Jamal, 2008a). These negative attitudes towards

Muslims were further perpetuated through media and legislation and indirectly lead to negative implications on Arab individuals as well (Jamal, 2008a).

In the context of the United States, Muslim identification is often inferred based on an individual's ethnic background and phenotypical features associated with it, including wearing the hijab or any other variation of a traditional veil, for women, and facial hair, for men (Read, 2008). This arbitrary method of identification is continued in much of the existing literature where Arab and Muslim identity are frequently confounded (Awad, 2010).

Unfavorable opinions of Muslims have been steadily rising since 2002 (Cashin, 2010). Unfamiliarity with Muslims has been cited as a major factor in this trend (Cashin, 2010). A study of Muslim adolescents revealed that approximately eighty-four percent of participants reported that they experienced discrimination based on their religion or ethnicity (Sirin and Fine, 2007). The same study also found that the longer participants were in the United States and the older they were, the more likely they were to experience being discriminated against at higher rates (Sirin and Fine, 2007).

Additional consequences to Islamophobia for Muslim immigrants include social exclusion and difficulties in everyday tasks, such as seeking employment, due to negative stereotypes related to their religious affiliation (Adam and Ward, 2016). The challenges related to Muslim identification have been found to exacerbate acculturative stress in MENA communities. Acculturative stress has been directly linked to poorer life satisfaction and wellbeing (Adam and Ward, 2016). These findings underscore the pervasiveness of Islamophobia in the United States and the consequences it has on the

daily lived experiences of MENA youth. The present study focuses on Muslim identification in an attempt to acknowledge its distinction from ethnic-racial and religious identity, while also further specifying our population of interest.

Ethnicity, Race, and Ethnic Racial Identity

Identity development is a hallmark of adolescence characterized by increased identity exploration and the desire for independence, ultimately leading to a clear sense of personal identity (Erikson, 1968). Existing literature has emphasized the importance of identity achievement through the processes of exploration and commitment (Marcia, 1966). These identity development processes are particularly important for ethnically diverse and immigrant youth in contemporary societies (Phinney, 1993). The development of ethnic-racial identity (ERI) has been linked with beneficial outcomes such as promoting psychological wellbeing and academic achievement, reducing or buffering against the negative impact of discrimination, and facilitating successful transitions into adulthood (Yip, 2018; Schwartz, Donnellan, Ravert, Luyckx & Zamboanga, 2012). Ethnically diverse and immigrant youth face additional obstacles while they engage in the processes of their ethnic-racial identity development, including a greater likelihood of experiencing unfair treatment and discrimination based on their ethnic-racial identification (Jamal, 2008a).

Recently, identity researchers have underscored the need for research on developmental processes implicated in exploration, resolution, and achievement of ethnic and racial identity (ERI). Previous literature has made a distinction between racial and ethnic identity. However, Umaña-Taylor and colleagues advise against the separation of

these identity components given the interaction of racial and ethnic identity in actual lived experiences (Umaña-Taylor et al, 2014). Ethnic racial identity is a fairly new meta construct that is used to conceptualize the unique development of ethnic minorities in the United States. This is a more appropriate construct because of the racialized lived experience of individuals in a US context.

In their 2012 article, Williams and colleagues support the integration of racial and ethnic identity in research in what they refer to as racial-ethnic identity (REI) (Williams, Tolan, Durkee, Francois, & Anderson, 2012). Existing literature has applied ethnic identity and racial identity differentially across groups bringing different perspectives to their implications on development. The combination of racial and ethnic identity can provide a more comprehensive picture of how the interaction of these identities influence individuals daily lived experiences and developmental outcomes (Williams, Tolan, Durkee, Francois, & Anderson, 2012).

Developmental Process of Ethnic Racial Identity in Ethnic Youth

Examining the development of individuals from ethnic backgrounds using the meta-construct of ERI is especially vital for understanding ethnic individual development in the United States given the racialization of their experiences (Umaña-Taylor et al, 2014). This is particularly relevant for MENA youth because of the ambiguity surrounding their racial identity in the United States (Jamal, 2008b). Often in the United States individuals from MENA countries are judged on their "Americanness", a national identity, resulting in their ethnic identity being undervalued and their racial identity being underexplored (Jamal, 2008b).

Recent developmental literature has begun to disentangle the complexities of ERI by drawing from existing identity literature. Most notably, Erik Erikson's (1993) identity stages along with the empirical work of Jean S. Phinney (1993) and James Marcia's identity statuses (1966) which have served and continue to be the foundation for developmental research on identity. Newer conceptualizations of ERI have acknowledged that multiple types of ERI *processes* and *content* dimensions exist. Umaña-Taylor and colleagues synthesized these ERI dimensions by adopting a developmental perspective and constructing a timeline that identifies key cognitive, social, and behavioral milestones for each developmental period that in turn inform developmental processes of ERI (Umaña-Taylor et al, 2014). *ERI processes* are the methods that individuals use to *explore* and r*esolve* their ERI (Umaña-Taylor et al, 2014). These ERI processes include differentiation of self and others, observed in early childhood, and internalization of cultural values, a process that is observed and adolescence and continued into emerging adulthood (Umaña-Taylor et al, 2014). *ERI content* refers to the outcomes of the aforementioned processes. For example, the process of differentiation of self and other leading to the content of ethnic labeling or ethnic knowledge or public or private regard (Umaña-Taylor et al, 2014).

Of particular interest to the present study are the periods of adolescence and emerging adulthood. These two developmental periods primarily differ in their ERI-related processes. In adolescence, key developmental ERI processes include, but are not limited to, negotiation, internalization of cultural values, and collective self-verification. During emerging adulthood, developmental ERI processes of transformation and further

elaboration and narrowing of ERI content unfolds. Both periods lead to content that includes public regard, ideology, salience, and centrality (Umaña-Taylor et al, 2014).

In sum, the present study focuses on adopting a developmental lens for framing ERI in MENA youth because of the lack of prior research directed at characterizing ERI development in MENA populations in the United States (Awad, Kia-Keating, & Amer, 2019). Currently, we know that existing studies on the development of ERI examine specific developmental periods and focus on ERI content rather than the ERI process. This may be a result of the lack of longitudinal studies that examine ERI processes as they relate to other developmental processes, making it difficult to discern the source of outcomes (Williams et al, 2012). Regardless, there is a need for the investigation of normative ERI developmental processes as they relate to youth development (Williams et al, 2012).

Promotive and Protective Effects of Ethnic Racial Identity against Discrimination

Given the heightened vulnerabilities of the MENA community to societal and institutional discrimination, it is vital to understand the sociohistorical context in which MENA youth develop. Moreover, given the recent spike in experiences of discrimination of these individuals in the United States (Pew Research Center, 2017), understanding the protective and promotive role of ERI may help mitigate the detrimental effects of these adverse experiences (Awad, Kia-Keating, and Amer, 2019). Previous research has shown that ERI has promotive and protective effects in ethnic minority and immigrant populations (Yip, 2018). Because discrimination may occur based on ethnic identity, racial identity, or religious identification it is important to consider identity salience and

as it relates to experiences of discrimination in MENA communities. Although American Muslims have diverse nationalities, this fact often goes unnoticed (Hatem, 2011). Because of the stereotype that all individuals from the MENA region practice Islam it is necessary to not only examine MENA immigrants in America but also Muslims since they have been grouped into one category (Hatem, 2011).

ERI has been found to have a direct positive association with psychological health and a positive and negative moderating effect on the impact of discrimination on psychological health (Umaña-Taylor et al., 2014; Yip, 2018). In the absence of prior research on MENA youth ERI development, developmental dynamics of ERI are considered in a sample of Mexican American youth given their shared ethnic minority statuses. Past work with Mexican American youth has shown that perceived discrimination was associated with lower self-esteem. Ethnic identity, ethnic affirmation, and ethnic exploration were all negatively associated with perceived discrimination (Romero & Roberts, 2003). The directionality of the relationship between perceived discrimination and ethnic identity is unclear and longitudinal studies are necessary to understand how perceived discrimination and ethnic identity are reciprocally associated over time (Romero & Roberts, 2003). Findings from this study revealed that ethnic affirmation increases resiliency in youth by protecting self-esteem from discrimination further highlighting the importance of ERI as a promotive factor for adolescent psychological adjustment.

Existing research has yet to reach a consensus on whether ERI protects against experiences of discrimination or if it worsens the negative effects (Yip, 2018). There is

existing literature that supports both sides of this argument, however, none of these studies focus on MENA populations. Burnett-Zeigler, Bohnert, and Ilgen (2013) conducted a study that examined the association between acculturation, ethnic identity, and major psychiatric disorder among Black, Hispanic, and Asian adults in the United States. The major findings of this study suggest that having a sense of pride, belonging, and attachment to one's racial/ethnic group may serve as a protective factor against psychiatric disorder (Burnett-Zeigler, et al., 2013). Alternatively, a loss of ethnic characteristics such as language may put individuals at risk for mental health disorders (Burnett-Zeigler, et al., 2013).

In a study examining ethnic identity and self-esteem, researchers found that ethnic identity affirmation, a variable they conceptualized as a protective factor, varied between and within different ethnic groups (Umaña-Taylor & Shin, 2007). Researchers attributed these differences to identity salience, whether or not ethnic identity holds significant weight in one's self-concept (Umaña-Taylor& Shin, 2007). Although the protective effects of ERI are unclear, the present study seeks to understand the moderating role of ERI while considering both between and within-group differences regionally (e.g., Middle Eastern vs. North African). Given the noted patterns of developmental consequences of ERI, the present study follows the established approaches for examining the promotive (i.e., main) and protective (i.e., interaction between ERI and discrimination) effects of ERI for adolescent and young adult development.

The Role of Acculturation in Immigrant Youth Development

Acculturation and identity processes, although two independent processes, occur simultaneously and often inform one another. Although the directionality and strength of the relationship vary depending on the proposed model, many recent studies cite and expand on Bronfenbrenner's 1977 ecological model of human development. Titzman and Lee proposed a conceptual model, according to which any individual who moves into a cultural context other than their own is immersed in both acculturative and developmental processes. Thus, it is important to examine predictors that include both acculturation and developmental processes to avoid overemphasizing one perspective one over the other and missing important developmental antecedents (Titzmann & Lee, 2018).

Newer studies of acculturation have taken a developmental approach to understand the processes of identity, rather than the categorical identification, as it relates to the implications of acculturative stress on immigrant's mental health. Existing literature suggests that racial/ethnic minorities have an increased risk of developing mental health disorders as a result of increased exposure to stressors. Most recently Sirin and colleagues identified multiple potential risk factors that immigrant youth face, such as increasing anti-immigrant sentiment, adjusting to a new culture, learning a new language, and being separated from their family. However, protective factors such as social support and ethnic identity have been identified as buffers against the negative effects of these risk factors (Sirin, Sin, Clingain, & Rogers-Sirin, 2019).

Many studies use the terminology of first and second-generation when referring to immigrants with *first-generation* referring to individuals who are the first to immigrate

and *second-generation* referring to the children of those immigrants. However, newer work across all social sciences is beginning to refer to generations in an incremental way depending on the time of immigration. For example, *1.5 generation* which refers to individuals who immigrate before or during their early teens (Matera, Stefanile, and Brown, 2011). Although this study does not specify a generation of interest and will only be reviewing the inclusion or omission of generational status in the final sample of articles it is important to briefly address the role of generational status because it has been found to have a role in immigrants acculturation attitudes and ultimately acculturation strategies (Matera, Stefanile, and Brown, 2011).

Acculturation Strategies

Berry, Phinney, Sam, and Vedder (2006) found that integration is the most successful acculturation profile, compared to assimilation, separation, and marginalization. Assimilation refers to an individual who seeks to identify with the dominant group and does not consider their culture of origin as important. In the separation strategy people value their culture of origin and do not want to learn about the dominant culture. Individuals using the marginalization strategy do not identify with either their culture of origin or the dominant culture. Individuals using the integration strategy maintain their culture while also learning about and adopting aspects of the dominant culture (Berry et al, 2006; Berry, 1997). Out of the four acculturation profiles noted in their study, integration leads to the best psychological outcomes (Berry et al, 2006). These findings suggest that in order to have the best outcome, immigrants should

aim to maintain aspects of their cultural identity while also establishing a connection to the larger society of their host country (Berry et al., 2006).

Acculturation processes in MENA populations, in the United States, is influenced by factors such as length of residency, age, and life satisfaction (Al Wekhian, 2016). In comparison to other immigrants, Arab immigrants were found to be more likely to retain their origin culture. However, increased time in a host country results in a positive relation to acculturation processes due to the increased exposure to the host culture (Al Wekhian, 2016). Rates of acculturation have also been found to have a direct relationship to the extent of satisfaction with the host country. Given the current social-political climate, this factor may serve as an obstacle. Finally, younger immigrants were more receptive to the process of acculturation, but this was discussed in the absence of discrimination (Al Wekhian, 2016).

The Impact of Discrimination on Acculturation Strategies

Acculturation literature notes that perceived discrimination is negatively related to an individual's desire to be involved in a larger society. Berry and colleagues confirmed that perceived discrimination was negatively and significantly related to both psychological and sociocultural adaptations (Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder, 2006). Similarly, in the field of identity literature, it was found that perceived discrimination was negatively related to the ERI content dimension of public regard in a longitudinal study to examine the associations between racial identity and discrimination (Seaton, Yip, & Sellers, 2009). Although both of the aforementioned studies highlight the negative effects of perceived discrimination, neither study examines these effects on the MENA

population, highlighting the urgent need to focus on investigating these processes among MENA youth.

When immigrants are ostracized or rejected by their host culture, the process of acculturation can become increasingly difficult or "nearly impossible" (Al Wekhian, 2016). Barriers to the process of acculturation unique to MENA-Muslim immigrants include differences in religion, anti-Muslim/MENA rhetoric in society, and discrimination. These obstacles of acculturation may lead to negative outcomes such as health disparities and conflicts within families (Al Wekhian, 2016). It is important to note that although some immigrants may desire to maintain some degree of their cultural values, when faced with these barriers to acculturation, they are more likely to adopt the marginalization strategy of acculturation (Al Wekhian, 2016), meaning that they are less likely to integrate into their host culture and are at an increased risk for experiencing negative outcomes such as compromised wellbeing (Berry et al, 2006).

Given the absence of prior research on MENA youth and emerging adults, research with elderly MENA adults is briefly considered. A study of 200 elderly participants ranging in age from 60 to 92 years old examined factors of acculturative stress (Wrobel, Hymes, & Farrag, 2008). The authors noted that 88.2% of participants were Muslim and all of them spoke Arabic as their primary language. The study found that the pressure to acculturate varied by country of origin and immigration status as well as time spent in the United States with higher reports of stress from newer immigrants (Wrobel et al., 2008). It was also found that Iraqi participants reported higher stress than Lebanese participants (Wrobel et al., 2008). This finding is not surprising considering the

history of migration with Syrian and Lebanese migrants coming to the United States earlier and blending into society more easily due to similarities in their phenotypic characteristics and belief systems to those of the mainstream U.S. population.

There are two main points of concern regarding the design of this study one being that 42% of participants were Lebanese and 33% were from Iraq leaving 25% of the remaining participants being a part of 6 other countries that were not detailed in this article. Participants in this study were also living in a densely populated Arab community (Wrobel et al., 2008). Taken together, these results underscore a drastic need for research with younger MENA individuals as well as a diverse sample that examine participants in countries other than the Levant.

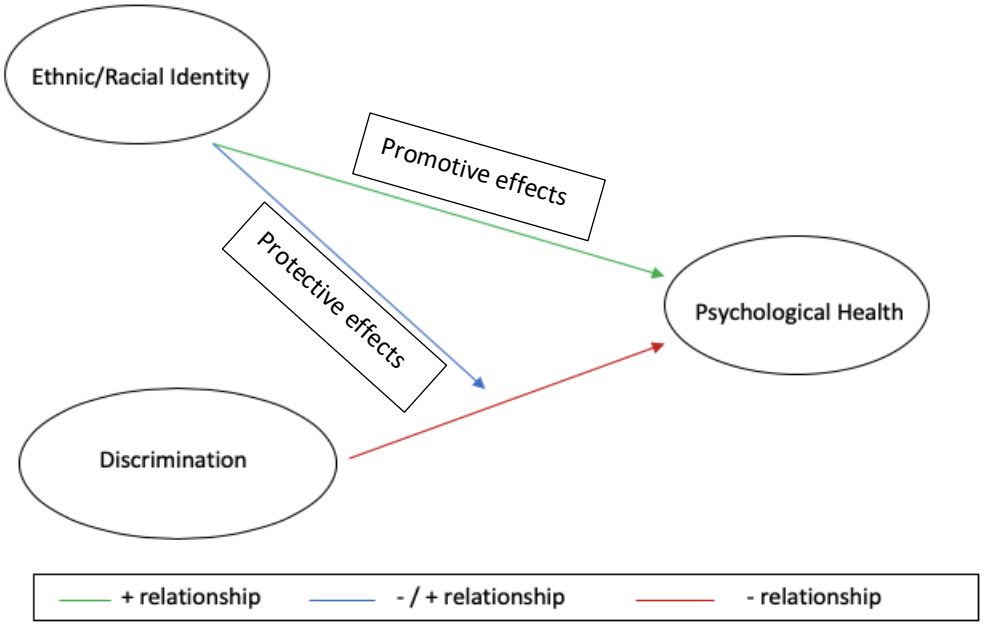
Promotive and Protective Effects of Acculturation against Discrimination

Limited research has shown ethnic and racial differences in differential acculturative difficulties in MENA populations. The research that has been conducted on these variables overrepresents individuals from the Levant, a region that includes countries such as Lebanon and Syria (Awad, 2010). Considering the waves of immigration of individuals from MENA countries into the United States the first wave of immigrants migrated from countries in the Levant (Naber, 2000). These individuals shared several commonalities with larger United States society such as similar religious ideologies, many were Christian, and phenotypic characteristics (Naber, 2000). Compared to later waves of immigrants this initial cohort arguably had a slight advantage and it is important to take into consideration the differential experiences of individuals that come from Middle Eastern versus North African countries. This lack of empirical

research as it relates to the process of acculturation in MENA populations and their implications for developmental and psychological outcomes underscores the need for improving the general understanding of acculturation in this community to reveal potential promotive and buffering effects of acculturation processes for MENA youth.

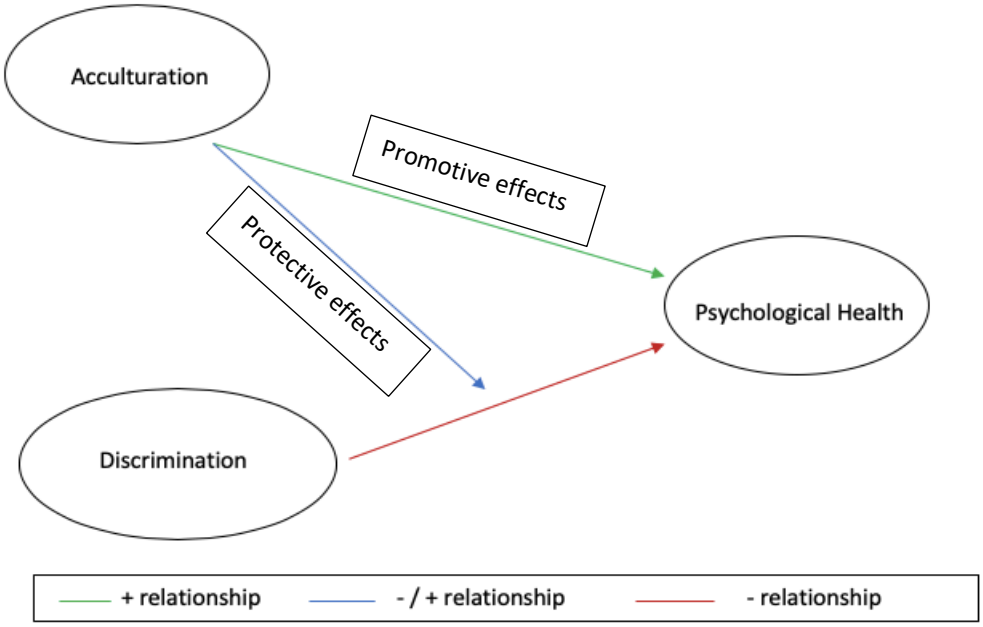
The Present Study

The purpose of this study is to conduct a systematic review to synthesize available research findings on the role of ERI and acculturation for Muslim-MENA adolescents and emerging adult's psychological wellbeing. In addition to describing the promotive (main) effects of these constructs on the psychological wellbeing of MENA youth, this study also considered how ERI and acculturation could serve protective (buffering) roles against adverse effects of discrimination on adolescent adjustment (see figures 1 and 2). This synthesis will inform future directions in advancing this line of research that is developmentally grounded and focus on positive youth development. This review will contribute to improving the understanding of how ERI and acculturation serve as protective factors that promote positive development in Muslim-MENA youth in the United States.



Adapted from Yip, T. (2018)

Figure 1. Conceptual model depicting the relationship between ERI, discrimination, and psychological health



Adapted from Yip, T. (2018)

Figure 2. Conceptual model depicting the relationship between acculturation, discrimination, and psychological health

METHODS

Search Strategy

The initial search was performed in September 2019. Eligible studies were searched for in electronic databases: PsychINFO, SocIndex, Web of Science, and Middle Eastern and Central Asian Studies in EBSCO. These databases were chosen because they are prominent in the fields of Psychology, Sociology, and Ethnic and Cultural Studies. The search was constrained to peer-reviewed articles for studies conducted in the United States. Studies had to include at least one keyword in the title or abstract for each of the following aspects: (I) ethnic identity, (II) religious identity, and (III) immigration.

I. Keywords for ethnic identity: *"ethnic ident*" or "racial ident*" or "cultural identit*"*

II. Keywords for religious identity: *"religious ident*" or "Islam" or "Muslim"*

III. Keywords for immigration: *"immigration" or "refugee" or "migrant" or "newcomer"*

In addition to the database search, a backward citation search was conducted on the reference lists of selected studies to identify articles that were missed in the database search.

Alternative Search Strategy

Following the completion of the initial search and article review the primary investigator attempted a supplemental search to screen articles by MENA countries that had the greatest number of immigrants into the United States. This strategy was adopted as a measure to see if the inclusion of this information would yield more relevant articles. It was found that the inclusion of this supplemental information did not yield any new information in comparison to the initial search. As a result, the findings from this search were not included in the final synthesis.

Inclusion Criteria

Studies were included if they met each of the following five criteria. First, the study population must include individuals between the age of 12-25 years old. Second, the study population must include individuals from Middle Eastern or North African (MENA) countries who identify as Muslim. Third, the study must have been conducted in the United States. Fourth, the study must include one or more of the following predictors: stereotype threat, stigma, discrimination. Fifth, the study must include one or more of the following outcomes: acculturation, process and content of ethnic-racial achievement, social belonging, or psychological adjustment.

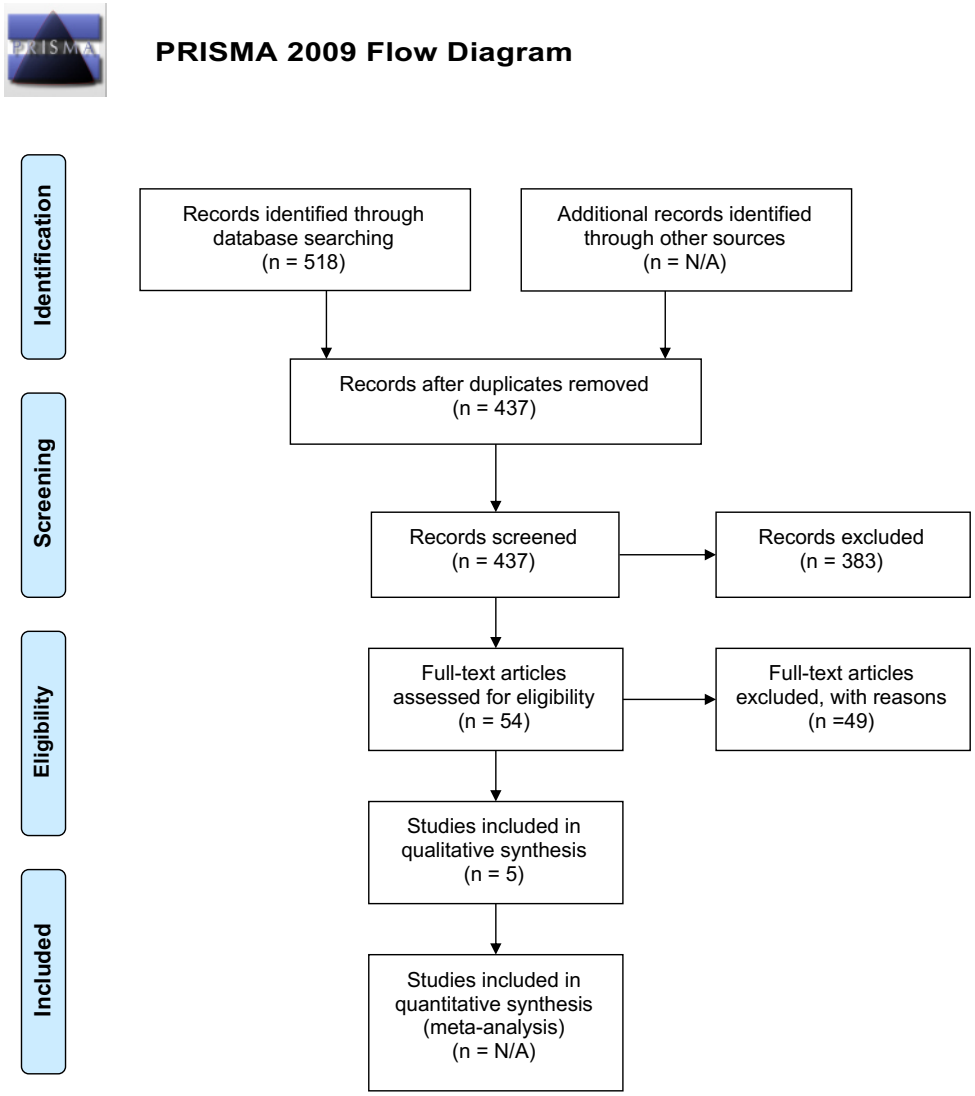
Exclusion Coding

Exclusion coding was conducted to further set boundaries for this review. Studies were excluded if they met one or more of the following seven criteria. First, the study is not a peer-reviewed article. Second, the study is not empirical. Third, the study is not based in the United States. Fourth, the study does not include participants from MENA

countries who identify as Muslim. Fifth, the study does not include one or more of the outcomes mentioned in the inclusion criteria. Sixth, the study does not include one or more of the predictors mentioned in the inclusion criteria. Seventh, the study does not include participants between the age of 12-25 years old. Duplicate studies were also excluded.

Study Selection

The database search resulted in 518 publications. The first author and a trained undergraduate research assistant screened and coded all of the initial unique results for inclusion ($\kappa = 0.85$). Disagreement was resolved through discussion between the first author and the research assistant. Following the initial screening of abstracts the full text of 54 articles were evaluated by both the primary author and the research assistant and resulted in a high agreement ($\kappa = 0.94$).



From: Moher D, Liberati A, Tetzlaff J, Altman DG, The PRISMA Group (2009). *P*referred *R*eporting *I*tems for *S*ystematic Reviews and *M*eta-*A*nalyses: The PRISMA Statement. PLoS Med 6(7): e1000097. doi:10.1371/journal.pmed1000097

Figure 3. PRISMA diagram detailing the article screening process

RESULTS

The database search generated a total of 518 articles. From the total generated articles, 81 were removed due to being duplicates. Following the abstract screening, an additional 383 articles were removed due to not meeting inclusion criteria (i.e., does not meet one or more of the following: a peer-reviewed article, an empirical study, conducted in the United States, includes participants from MENA countries who identify as Muslim, includes relevant predictors, includes relevant outcomes, includes participants between the age of 12-25). Of the 54 full-text articles assessed for eligibility, 49 articles were excluded with reason. A majority of articles were removed due to not including one or more of the following outcomes: acculturation, process and content of ethnic-racial achievement, social belonging, psychological adjustment. The second most common reason for article exclusion was due to not having participants that identified as Muslim and were from MENA countries (see figure 3). Full-text screening resulted in a total of 5 articles meeting the inclusion criteria. No additional studies were found by a backward citation search.

Table 1. Descriptive characteristics of studies included in final review

Data collection	
Primary	3
Secondary	2
Sample size	
$n < 100$	1
$100 \leq n \leq 300$	3
$n > 300$	1
Age group	
11 – 18 years	3
18 – 50 years	2
Country of origin	
Arab	2
Egypt	1
Iraq	3
Jordan	1
Lebanon	3
Libya	1
Palestine	1
Saudi Arabia	1
Somalia	1
Sudan	1
Syria	2
Tunisia	1
Yemen	2
Refugee/immigrant status	
Refugee	2
Immigrant	1
NR*	2
Generational status	
First	1
Second	2
NR*	2
Data collection location	
California	1
Detroit	2
Maine	1

Massachusetts	2
Michigan	1
New York	1
Texas	1

***:** indicates item not reported in study

Note: the total number of studies does not add up to five because some studies included participants from numerous countries

Table 2. Overview of final studies included in review

Study	Study Purpose	Association between key predictor and outcome	Outcome Measures	Relevant Findings
Examined promotive effect of ERI				
Ahmed, S. R., Kia-Keating, M., & Tsai, K. H. (2011). A structural model of racial discrimination, acculturative stress, and cultural resources among Arab American adolescents. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, *48*(3-4), 181-192.	To test a risk and resilience model that delineates the relationship between socio-cultural adversities, cultural resources, and psychological distress.	Negative	Psychological Distress	- Findings supported the role of cultural resources as promotive in Arab American adolescent psychological well-being
Amer, M. M., & Hovey, J. D. (2007). Socio-demographic differences in acculturation and mental health for a sample of 2nd generation/early immigrant Arab Americans. *Journal of Immigrant and Minority Health*, *9*(4), 335.	Aims to explore the sociodemographic factors that influence acculturation and mental health patterns for Arab Americans	Positive	Depression and Acculturative Stress	- Among Muslim participants, integration was not associated with better mental health - Religiosity was predictive of less depression
Examined protective effect of ERI				
Abdulrahim, S., James, S. A., Yamout, R., & Baker, W. (2012). Discrimination and psychological distress: Does Whiteness matter for Arab	To examine differences in reporting racial/ethnic discrimination among Arab Americans as well as investigate the association between	Negative	Psychological Distress	- Instrumentally assimilated participants reported more discrimination than less instrumentally assimilated participants

Americans? *Social science & medicine*, *75*(12), 2116-2123.	discrimination and psychological distress.			- Arab Americans who experience distance from Whiteness- report more discrimination
Examined promotive effect of acculturation				
Sirin, S. R., & Fine, M. (2007). Hyphenated selves: Muslim American youth negotiating identities on the fault lines of global conflict. *Applied Development Science*, *11*(3), 151-163.	To explore the challenges of being young, Muslim, and American and how participants negotiate their identities	Not Significant	Anxiety	- Greater integration of US and home culture leads to less reports of discriminatory acts
Examined protective effect of acculturation				
Ellis, B. H., MacDonald, H. Z., Klunk-Gillis, J., Lincoln, A., Strunin, L., & Cabral, H. J. (2010). Discrimination and mental health among Somali refugee adolescents: The role of acculturation and gender. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, *80*(4), 564.	To examine the moderating role of social identity in the association between discrimination and mental health among Somali adolescent refugees	Negative	Depression and Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)	- Female participants with greater Somali acculturation exhibited better mental health outcomes - Male participants with greater American acculturation exhibited better mental health outcomes

Descriptive Overview of Studies

All studies included in the systematic review were conducted in the United States. A majority of studies used a primary data collection strategy (60%, n = 3), and 2 relied on secondary data analysis. For example, Abdulrahim and colleagues (2012) used data from the Detroit Arab American Study (DAAS) which was carried out in 2003. Amer and Hovey (2007) also used an existing data set but did not discuss any details beyond that sample's demographic characteristics. A majority of data was collected in the midwestern region of the United States. Most studies reported outcomes for participants between 11-18 years of age (60%, n = 3), and 2 studies (40%) reported outcomes for participants between 18-50 years of age. The most common country of origin represented in the studies were Iraq (n = 3) and Lebanon (n = 3). The second most common countries were Syria (n = 2), Yemen (n = 2), and Arab-unspecified (n = 2). The most common generational status among study participants was second-generation (40%, n = 2). A single study (20%) reported on first-generation participants and two studies (40%) did not report participant generational status. Two studies (40%) represented participants that identified themselves as refugees. A single study (20%) represented participants that examined themselves as immigrants-unspecified and two studies (40%) did not report on the refugee or immigrant status of participants. Most studies (60%, n = 3) examined the promotive role of ethnic/racial identity or acculturation on psychological outcomes.

Measures of Discrimination

The measurement of discrimination varied across all studies. Two studies used existing scales to measure discrimination (40%). Sirin and Fine's (2007) study used a 10-item measure adopted from Krieger and Sidney's 1996 study. The Krieger scale assessed the frequency of experiences of discrimination among participants across various settings. Although these experiences could have been attributed to ethnicity or religion participants were given a single discrimination score with the study sample showing a strong internal consistency ($\alpha = .89$). Ellis and colleagues (2010) used the Everyday Discrimination (EDD) scale (Essed, 1991) as well as the global question "have you ever experienced discrimination" (Ellis, MacDonald, Klunk-Gillis, Lincoln, Strunin, & Cabral, 2010). The EDD is a 9-item measure evaluated ongoing and routine experiences of discrimination and participants attributed the reason for these experiences to either their race, ethnicity, or religion. This measure showed good internal consistency ($\alpha = .81$) among the sample in the Ellis and colleagues' study (2010).

Two studies (40%) used a self-developed or modified measure of discrimination. Abdulrahim, James, Yamout, and Baker (2012) examined racial/ethnic discrimination using a self-developed 5-item measure that inquired about a variety of experiences of discrimination that the participants or anyone in their household had experienced in the last two years preceding the study (e.g., "verbal insults or abuse", "threatening words or gestures", "physical attack", "vandalism or destruction of property", and "loss of employment"). These experiences could have been attributed to race, ethnicity, or religion. Ultimately, the measure was transformed into a single dichotomized variable

that indicated no discrimination or at least one type of discrimination among participants, and internal consistency was not reported for this measure. Ahmed, Kia-Keating, and Tsai, (2011) used the Perceived Racism Scale-Child (PRS-C) (Nyborg, 2000) which was modified to replace 'Black' with 'Arab' to examine participants perception of institutional racism on the Arab community. Within this measure there was a subscale that assessed the frequency of personal incidents of racism amongst participants. The sample in Ahmed, Kia-Keating, and Tsai's study (2011) demonstrated a strong internal consistency ($\alpha = .93$).

A single study (20%) did not include a measure of discrimination. In their 2007 study. Amer and Hovey identified discrimination as a stressor that may influence acculturation but did not report a measurement for this variable.

Measurement of Ethnic Racial Identity

All studies provided little to no definition of ethnic-racial identity. Amer and Hovey (2007) discussed the difficulty of defining "Arab identity" due to diversity in countries of origin, histories, and religions. Arab American identity is even more difficult to define considering the factors mentioned previously in addition to the time and context of immigration into the United States. As a result, no specific definition was provided for the study (Amer & Hovey 2007). Similarly, three other studies (Sirin & Fine, 2007; Abdulrahim, James, Yamout, & Baker, 2012; Ahmed, Kia-Keating, & Tsai, 2011) provided no definition for ethnic-racial identity for their studies. Ellis, MacDonald, Klunk-Gillis, Lincoln, Strunin, and Cabral (2010) conceptualized the development of social identity as something that is achieved through acculturation.

Two studies (40%) did not include a measure to evaluate ethnic-racial identity (Sirin & Fine, 2007; Ellis, MacDonald, Klunk-Gillis, Lincoln, Strunin, & Cabral, 2010). Measures of ethnic/racial identity varied across the remaining three studies. Abdulrahim and colleagues study measured *ethnic* centrality using an item from the Detroit Arab American Study (DAAS) that asked participants if they identified as Arab-Americans. Racial identification was assessed using a census race question that included six categories: "white, black or African American, American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Pacific Islander, and 'other'".

Two studies (40%) used existing scales of ethnic identity (Ahmed, Kia-Keating, & Tsai, 2011; Amer & Hovey, 2007). Ahmed, Kia-Keating, and Tsai's study the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM) (Phinney, 1992) was used to assess ethnic affirmation, belongingness, pride, and participation in ethnic group-related activities. Participants received a total score that indicated ethnic identity endorsement. The sample in Ahmed, Kia-Keating, and Tsai's study demonstrated a good internal consistency (α = .86).

In Amer and Hovey's study, Arab ethnic identity was measured using the Arab Ethnic Identity Measure (AEIM) (Amer, 2002). Because this measure was originally developed for male respondents the items had to be modified to be inclusive of females. From the 33-item questionnaire only two subscales were used in the study, Religious-Family Values and Ethnic Arab Practices. This was due to inadequate reliability and validity in the Sense of Belonging/Ethnic Pride and Friendship subscales. The sample in

Amer and Hovey's study demonstrated a good internal consistency for Religious-Family Values ($\alpha = .86$) and a fair internal consistency for Ethnic Arab Practices ($\alpha = .64$).

Relationship between Ethnic Racial Identity and Psychological Outcomes

Among the two studies that used ERI as their key predictor, a single study examined the promotive effect of ERI on participant psychological outcomes (Ahmed, Kia-Keating, & Tsai, 2011). In Ahmed, Kia-Keating, and Tsai's study (2011), a negative association between ethnic identity and psychological distress was found suggesting that ethnic identity has a direct and promotive effect on psychological distress levels among participants represented in this study (i.e. predominantly Muslim, first-generation, adolescence from Lebanon, Iraq, and Yemen).

Abdulrahim and colleagues (2012) examined the protective effect of ERI on participant psychological outcomes (Abdulrahim, James, Yamout, & Baker, 2012). This study found a negative buffering effect of ethnic centrality in the relationship between discrimination and psychological distress. These findings suggest that self-identification as Arab-American weakens the negative mental health implications of discrimination among participants in this study.

Measurement of Acculturation

Three studies examined acculturation as a key predictor of the relationship between discrimination and psychological outcomes (Amer & Hovey, 2007; Ellis, MacDonald, Klunk-Gillis, Lincoln, Strunin, & Cabral, 2010; Sirin & Fine, 2007). Acculturation was defined in the studies conducted by Amer and Hovey (2007) and Ellis and colleagues (2010). They both adopted Berry's 1980 definition of acculturation and

defined it as the degree to which participants identify with their host culture as well as their culture of origin. The study conducted by Sirin and Fine (2007) did not provide a specific definition for acculturation.

Between these three studies two studies used an existing measure (Amer & Hovey, 2007; Sirin & Fine, 2007). Amer and Hovey (2007) assessed the acculturation strategy using the Arab Acculturation Scale (AAS) (Barry, 1996) and the Arab Acculturative Strategy Scale (AASS) (Amer, 2002). The AAS captures the degree of marginalization versus integration and separation versus assimilation. Both the marginalization-integration ($\alpha = .74$) and separation assimilation ($\alpha = .72$) subscales exhibited fair internal consistency. The AASS is a two-item measure that assesses participants' desired strategy of assimilation and their current strategy. This scale was used to conceptualize a continuum of engagement from both to neither cultures (Amer, 2002). Internal consistency was not provided or this measure.

The Acculturation, Habits, and Interests Multicultural Scale for Adolescents (AHIMSA) (Unger, Gallagher, Shakit, Ritt-Olson, Palmer, & Johnson, 2002) was used in Sirin and Fine's (2007) study to measure the degree to which participants combine or separate aspects of the host culture and country of origin. The AHIMSA provides a list of activities and participants are asked to indicate which groups they engage in these activities with. Options include people from "the US, the country my family is from, neither, or both" which correlate to assimilation, separation, marginalization, and integration respectively. Internal consistency was not reported for this measure.

A single study used a modified version of an existing measure (Ellis et al., 2010). Ellis and colleagues (2010) utilized the behavioral acculturation scale from the Language, Identity, and Behavior (LIB) acculturation measure (Birman & Trickett, 2001) to assess participants' acculturation with respect to their host and country of origin cultures. The measure was modified to replace the culture-specific terms from Russian to American and Somali, both cultures were assessed in separate assessments. Therefore, internal consistency was fair for both American (α = .74) and Somali acculturation (α = .71).

Relationship between Acculturation and Psychological Outcomes

In their examination of the promotive effect of acculturation, Amer and Hovey (2007) found when compared to Christian participants, Muslim participants reported higher levels of separation. Amer and Hovey (2007) attribute these findings to the unique barriers to acculturation Muslim participants face such as increased instances of discrimination and anti-Muslim public sentiment. The authors also found that the acculturation strategy was not related to acculturation stress or depression among Muslim participants. Taken together, these findings challenge the notion that there is a single acculturative strategy that leads to better psychological outcomes among Muslim-MENA participants (Amer & Hovey, 2007).

Sirin and Fine's study (2007) also examined the promotive effect of acculturation on participants' perceptions of discrimination and anxiety indicators. Among the male participants, acculturation, more specifically increased level of integration, was negatively associated with their perception of discrimination; this association was not significant for females. Also, among male participants level of integration had no

significant relationship with any of the anxiety indicators. For female participants, the level of integration had no significant relationship with discrimination as well as physiological anxiety (Sirin and Fine, 2007).

Ellis and colleagues (2010) examined the protective effect of acculturation on the relationship between everyday discrimination and mental health. Among the female participants participation in their host culture's activities led to better mental health. Conversely, male participants that exhibited greater participation in American culture showed better mental health outcomes (Ellis et al., 2010). The findings in Sirin and Fine (2007) as well as Ellis and colleagues' study (2010) demonstrate differential psychological outcomes as a function of gender.

DISCUSSION

Taking into account Muslim-MENA immigrants heightened risk for experiencing discrimination (Adam & Ward, 2016) and the lack of developmental research that focuses on their positive psychological adjustment (Awad, 2010), there is a critical need for an examination of existing literature to identify the future directions for advancing this critical work. Both ethnic-racial identity (ERI) and acculturation strategies have been linked to promotive and protective effects on mental health and other psychological adjustment outcomes in adolescents and young adults from other minority groups, including African American, Latinx, and Asian Americans (Al Wekhian, 2016; Umaña-Taylor et al., 2014; Yip, 2018). Thus, the goal of this study was to conduct a systematic review to (1) examine the promotive and protective roles of ERI and acculturation against adverse effects of discrimination on the psychological adjustment of Muslim-MENA youth and (2) consider group differences as a function of geographic region, age, gender, and generational status. This systematic review revealed that ERI has both a promotive and protective role in the relationship between discrimination and psychological outcomes whereas acculturation only had a significant protective role in the same relationship. These results underscore the need to apply and refine developmentally and culturally grounded frameworks (e.g., Suárez-Orozco et al., 2018) to understand and promote Muslim-MENA immigrant youth adaptation and psychological adjustment.

Although these promotive and protective links have been examined in other minority groups, the cultural nuances that shape MENA population's lived experiences remain understudied. Previous research has examined Muslim-MENA adolescents' and adults reactions to increased experiences of discrimination and has found two main trajectories of psychological responses to these experiences. Firstly, some individuals would attempt to distance themselves from anything that would associate them with their ethnic or religious identities (Read, 2008). For example, individuals with Arabic names would Americanize their names, women would remove their headscarves, or men would shave their beards (Read, 2008). The second pattern of responses included preservation or showcasing of the characteristics that identify individuals ethnically or religiously as a way of expressing pride or as a political statement (Read, 2008). Considering that the pathway to ethnic-racial pride or abandonment and adoption of different acculturative strategies in the face of discrimination is unclear, more research in this population is needed to better understand and promote positive trajectories for development in Muslim-MENA immigrant youth

Guided by an integrative risk and resilience framework (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2018), this study begins to appreciate the complexity of lived experience and acknowledges the interaction between the individual, their microsystem, immigration context, sociohistorical contexts, and global forces in their experience of adapting into their host culture (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2018). Adopting this approach is necessary in order to identify sources of risk and resilience in the lives of Muslim-MENA immigrants and provide an accurate account of their developmental trajectories. Thus, this systematic

review examined empirical evidence for the promotive and protective effects of ERI and acculturation on psychological adjustment among Muslim identifying MENA immigrants in the United States. In a *promotive* model, the construct of interest (i.e., ethnic-racial identity or acculturation) is conceptualized to have a direct and positive effect on the psychological or developmental outcome. In contrast, in a *protective* model, the construct of interest is conceptualized as moderator of the relationship between the predictor (i.e., stressor or discrimination) and psychological adjustment outcome such that the moderator weakens the negative effect of the predictor on the psychological adjustment outcome. This review examined both promotive and protective effects of ERI and acculturation in order to better understand their long-theorized role for psychological adjustment outcomes among Muslim-MENA community, who are particularly vulnerable to experiences of prejudice and discrimination in the contemporary U.S. (Naber, 2000; Jamal, 2008; Al Wekhian, 2016). The secondary focus of this review was to understand how these relationships vary as a function of the country of origin, age, gender, and generational status. Theoretical and applied implications and direction for future research are discussed below.

Ethnic-racial identity

Successful adaptation of immigrant youth can be assessed through the examination of age-salient developmental tasks (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2018). ERI development is a developmental task that is salient in both adolescence and emerging adulthood (Umaña-Taylor et al, 2014); however, it is difficult to assess adaptive development in these studies given that both studies focus on ethnic identification and

practices rather than developmental components of ERI (i.e., ERI exploration, resolution, achievement). ERI development needs to be examined in Muslim-MENA youth because recent research with other groups is shown that ERI development can serve a beneficial role for youth development (Umaña-Taylor et al., 2014; Yip, 2018). Measurement of ERI included the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM) (Ahmed, Kia-Keating, & Tsai, 2011), Arab Ethnic Identity Measure (AEIM) (Amer & Hovey, 2007), and a measure of ethnic centrality which was assessed using an item from the Detroit Arab American Study (DAAS) that asked participants if they identified as Arab-Americans (Abdulrahim, James, Yamout, & Baker, 2012).

A common issue with these measures subscales or self-developed scales is that they do not assess *identity,* but rather focus on *identification*. *Identity* can be described as a multi-dimensional self-concept that is constantly evolving through individual experience, whereas *identification* is a less dynamic status or classification. A single item asking participants if they identify as Arab-American is not enough to properly examine what Abdulrahim and colleagues (2012) refer to as "Arab American Ethnic Centrality". This single-item assessment acknowledges ERI *content* (outcomes) rather than the developmental *processes* that lead to the outcome. Examining ERI process and content is necessary in order to better understand the normative development of this identity among MENA-immigrant youth (Williams et al, 2012).

Ahmed, Kia-Keating, and Tsai's (2011) use of the MEIM would have been better suited to assess ethnic identity if they had used the items related to achievement since it refers to the exploration and resolution aspects of ethnic identity development (Phinney,

1992). By summing all of the items the researchers include measures related to affirmation, behaviors, and achievement which assess ethnic group belonging, exploration/resolution, and engagement in ethnic group practices respectively (Phinney, 1992). Recent literature has identified these three dimensions of the MEIM as distinct components of ethnic identity development that should be examined independently in order to understand individual differences in ethnic exploration and feelings towards their ethnic group (Umaña-Taylor, Yazedjian, & Bámaca-Gómez, 2004). This means that each of these dimensions are unique ERI processes that are associated with age-specific milestones and would be better assessed at developmentally appropriate ages with process-relevant measures (Umaña-Taylor et al, 2014).

A key limitation of this research in Muslim-MENA youth is that researchers did not examine group differences as a function of ethnicity *and* race. By solely examining participants by their endorsement of Arab ethnicity this implies that Muslim-MENA individuals are part of a monolithic group. By focusing on endorsement and identification, these measures do not capture the process of ERI development (i.e. exploration and resolution). The independent examination of ethnicity and race does not acknowledge the interaction of these two identity components that occur daily for ethnic-immigrant minorities (Umaña-Taylor et al, 2014). Examining the meta construct of ERI would be more appropriate because it would reflect the actual lived experience of ethnic minority youth more comprehensively (Umaña-Taylor et al, 2014). Additionally, ERI is a better construct because it is a universal developmental process that all youth engage in.

Promotive effects

In the single study that examined the promotive effects of ERI on psychological outcomes, Ahmed, Kia-Keating, and Tsai (2011) found a negative association between ethnic identity and psychological distress. Psychological distress was evaluated in this study by measuring internalizing and externalizing symptoms, depression, and anxiety. Participants that endorsed higher ethnic identity (i.e. endorsing the Arab-American identity) reported fewer symptoms across all measures of psychological distress (Ahmed, Kia-Keating, & Tsai, 2011). These findings are in line with existing literature which has found ERI to have direct positive effects on psychological health among other minority groups, including African Americans, Asian Americans, and Latinxs (Umaña-Taylor et al., 2014; Yip, 2018).

Protective effects

Abdulrahim and colleagues (2012) examined the protective effect of ethnic centrality on the relationship between discrimination and psychological distress. They found a negative buffering effect of ethnic centrality, meaning that increased ethnic centrality minimized the negative association between discrimination and distress among participants (Abdulrahim, James, Yamout, & Baker, 2012). These findings support the existing literature that has shown the protective effect of ERI in other minority groups.

Considering that in this study discrimination was a dichotomized variable, no discrimination or at least one type, and that it could have been attributed to race, ethnicity, or religion the exact nature of the protective effect of ERI remains unclear and needs to be further investigated in future research. Participants could have attributed

these experiences of discrimination to religion or race exclusively depending on which identity held a greater weight in their self-concept (Umaña-Taylor& Shin, 2007). This notion of *identity salience,* the significance of an identity to one's perception of themselves and others, is a vital component that needs to be included in future examinations of Muslim-MENA youth in order to better characterize differential psychological outcomes between participants (Umaña-Taylor & Shin, 2007). Even though participants may have reported fewer symptoms in their study, there was still variability between participants in the number of symptoms reported (Abdulrahim, James, Yamout, & Baker, 2012). More studies are needed in order to discern if these differences can be attributed to differences in experiences of discrimination and what identities are associated with these instances or if the variance is due to differences in demographic characteristics.

Acculturation

Acculturation is the process by which cultural groups come into contact with one another and as a result changes occur in the cultural patterns of either or both groups (Redfield, Linton, & Herskovits, 1936). Compared to their non-immigrant origin peers, immigrant-origin youth exhibit a greater need for the cultural competencies that they learn through the tasks associated with acculturation (e.g., learning a new language and societal norms) in order to successfully adapt to the receiving society (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2018). Many dimensions of acculturation, including emotional, relational, and linguistic, have been identified as influential in immigrant acculturation strategies and

integration, as well as bicultural adaptation, appear to predict better psychological adaptation and developmental outcomes (Berry et al., 2006; Berry, 1997).

Four acculturation strategies have been identified in existing literature: assimilation, separation, integration, and marginalization (Berry et al., 2006). Each strategy describes varying levels of perceived importance of an individual's culture of origin and host culture. Marginalization refers to no importance being placed on either host or origin culture. In the assimilation strategy greater importance is placed on the host culture. In contrast, the separation strategy places greater importance on the culture of origin. Among all the different strategies integration, importance placed on both cultures, has been linked with the best outcomes (Berry et al., 2006) Individuals adopting the integration strategy are often referred to in existing literature as practicing *biculturalism*, the co-existence of two cultures. As a result, many studies examining acculturation focus on examining which acculturative strategies are being adopted or measuring the level of cultural maintenance between the country of origin and host country.

Studies included in this systematic review measured acculturation via Arab Acculturation Scale (AAS) (Barry, 1996), the Arab Acculturative Strategy Scale (AASS) (Amer, 2002), The Acculturation, Habits, and Interests Multicultural Scale for Adolescents (AHIMSA) (Unger et al., 2002) and the Language, Identity, and Behavior (LIB) Acculturation measure (Birman & Trickett, 2001).

The AAS focuses on measuring the four acculturation strategies. The items in this measure were related to social interactions and relationships with Americans and/or Arabs (Barry, 1996). Acculturation was examined using two subscales: marginalization-

integration subscale and separation-assimilation subscale. Higher scores in the marginalization-integration subscale indicated integration and higher scores in the separation-assimilation subscale indicated assimilation. The AASS is a two-item measure that measures the extent participants wanted to adopt American cultural practices and how much they have adopted American cultural practices. For both items' participants were given choices that also reflected the four acculturation strategies.

The AHIMSA was constructed to be brief and inclusive of several components of acculturation, such as ethnic interaction and language preferences, to make the scale applicable across different ethnic groups (Unger et al., 2002). The response options include the United States, the country my family is from, both, and neither to measure assimilation, separation, integration, and marginalization respectively (Unger et al., 2002). Considering that participants are responding on the basis of preference and that the items are very broad, this measure does not assess the process of acculturation. A key limitation of this scale is that there is a distinct difference between cultural preferences and acculturation strategies (Unger et al., 2002). Individuals' ability to engage in the acculturation process through the different strategies has been found to differentially impact wellbeing (Berry et al., 2006). The AHIMSA does not measure the dynamic process of acculturation as it does not acknowledge the unique acculturative experience of immigrants that includes tasks such as learning a new language and coping with anti-immigrant sentiment (Sirin et al., 2019).

Regarding the LIB acculturation measure participants are asked parallel questions related to the constructs of language competence, behavioral acculturation, and cultural

identity for both American and country of origin culture (Birman & Trickett, 2001). Using this scale, researchers are able to obtain a total acculturation score for both American and country of origin culture (Birman & Trickett, 2001). The use of this scale is more appropriate when compared to the AHIMSA because it represents tasks that indicate instrumental adaptation into a new culture (Birman & Trickett, 2001). However, much of the existing literature supports integration as the most successful acculturation profile (Berry et al, 2006; Berry, 1997). By examining the country of origin and host country independently it is difficult to determine which strategy individuals are adopting and how assimilated they have become to their host culture.

Promotive effects

Amer and Hovey (2007) found higher levels of separation among Muslim participants. Although Muslim participants reported higher levels of separation, acculturation strategy was not related to acculturation stress or depression among Muslim participants. Sirin and Fine (2007) found a non-significant association between acculturation and psychological outcomes. Considering that the participants were between the ages of 12 and 18 at the time of the study and a majority of participants were born in the United States these findings are not completely unpredictable. Both younger age and time in the host country have been found to be linked to higher levels of assimilation when comparing first-generation children to their immigrant parents (Al Wekhian, 2016). In order to advance this line of research, future studies should consider factors such as participants' age, age during the time of immigration, and generation status. Understanding how the adoption of different acculturation strategies varies as a

function of these factors will be beneficial in obtaining the information necessary to support the successful adaptation of immigrant populations.

Protective effects

Ellis and colleagues (2010) found a negative association in their examination of the buffering role of acculturation on the relationship between discrimination and mental health. This pattern is in line with existing literature that has shown that acculturation has a moderating role relationship between discrimination and wellbeing (Wrobel et al., 2008). An important characteristic of this study is its sample that focused exclusively on refugees who ranged from 11 to 20 years of age and had been in the United States for an average of 5.4 years (Ellis et al. 2010). Refugee status is a unique characteristic of this sample that can potentially have an impact on the associations found in this study. A key difference between a refugee and an immigrant is the context of their resettlement. Refugees are typically individuals who are forced to leave their country of origin due to conflict or war. As a consequence, this population may be exposed to increased economic strain, alienation, and, possibly, psychological trauma which can lead to additional barriers to the process of acculturation, psychological adaptation, and development (Lindencrona, Ekblad, & Hauff, 2007).

It should be noted that gender differences were detected in these patterns such that, for female participants, greater Somali behavioral acculturation led to better mental health, whereas male who endorsed greater levels of American behavioral acculturation showed better mental health, including fewer reports of depressive symptoms (Ellis et al., 2010).Although the findings for female participants are in line with existing literature,

it is unclear why American behavioral acculturation leads to better outcomes among male participants. Taken together, these findings challenge the notion that the most successful acculturation strategy is integration.

Additional risk and resources

A secondary goal of this study was to consider additional factors that may contribute to individual differences in ERI development and acculturation strategies. These factors include country of origin, age, gender, and generational status and may assist in capturing the heterogeneity that exists across the Muslim-MENA community (Titzmann &Lee, 2018). Additionally, the discussion of ethnic-racial identity and acculturation salient characteristics will provide a more comprehensive illustration of the differences between individuals.

Country of Origin: Middle East vs. North Africa

The study conducted by Ellis and colleagues (2010) was the only study that examined one ethnic group exclusively (i.e. Somalian participants). The remaining studies included participants from across multiple countries from the MENA region. Sirin and Fine (2007) referred to all MENA participants as Arab without specifying the country of origin. Although the other studies listed the participant's countries of origin, they did not present their findings differentiated by country or by region. This represents a critical limitation of assuming homogeneous outcomes and processes considering the diversity that exists in the MENA region. By grouping participants together as one Arab or MENA population, researchers may fail to notice differences in lived experiences as a function of ethnicity.

Age and gender

Among the two studies that included participants from different age ranges (Abdulrahim, James, Yamout, & Baker, 2012; Amer & Hovey, 2007), neither of these studies examined differences between age groups. The remaining studies (Ahmed, Kia-Keating, & Tsai, 2011; Ellis et al., 2010; Sirin & Fine, 200) examined participants between the ages of 11-20 years old and did not distinguish between adolescents and emerging adults. As a result, differences as a function of age cannot be examined in this review.

All but one study (Abdulrahim, James, Yamout, & Baker, 2012) discussed results as a function of gender. Ellis and colleagues found that female participants' participation in their host culture's activities led to better mental health. Conversely, male participants that exhibited greater participation in American culture showed better mental health outcomes (Ellis et al., 2010). Similarly, the male participants in Amer and Hovey's study (2007) reported significantly less ethnic Arab practices. Ahmed, Keating, and Tsai (2011) found that female adolescents were more likely to report greater ethnic identity. Sirin and Fine (2007) also found different outcomes between male and female participants. In their study among Muslim girls, discrimination was related to their physiological measures of anxiety and worry, whereas boys were less likely to report discriminatory acts and were more integrated with social and cultural activities of both host and country of origin culture (Sirin and Fine, 2007). These findings suggest that there may be gender-specific differences that lead to varying experiences with discrimination and as a result varying approaches to acculturation. Future studies should consider gender expectations in both

the culture of the country of origin as well as the host country and how this may differentially impact individuals' experiences of discrimination.

Generational status

Only two studies included generational status in their final discussion. In Ahmed and colleagues' study (2011), generational status was significantly correlated with ethnic identity with earlier generations reported greater levels of ethnic identity. Amer and Hovey (2007) found that among second-generation Muslim participants, the children of individuals who are the first to immigrate, religiosity may be a stronger predictor of better mental health rather than a particular acculturation strategy. These findings support the influential role of generational status in the lived experience of immigrants (Matera, Stefanile, & Brown, 2011). However, continued study is needed in order to understand the individuals who aren't born to first-generation immigrants. These individuals are referred to as the 1.5 generation which includes individuals who immigrate before or during their pre-teens. Future studies would benefit from the continued examination of generational status because it has found to influence acculturation attitudes and strategies among immigrants (Matera, Stefanile, & Brown, 2011).

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Among the final studies included in this review, all of them were published in the field of psychology. Although publication databases from Psychology, Sociology, and Ethnic and Cultural Studies were utilized, the articles obtained from them were ultimately excluded for not meeting inclusion criteria. It is important to note that this systematic review is developmentally grounded (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2018) and given the nature of this work included studies needed to meet specific inclusion criteria in order to comprehensively examine the promotive and protective effects ERI and acculturation as they relate to Muslim-MENA-youth development. However, different disciplines (i.e., psychology, sociology, ethnic and cultural studies) may be doing similar work with differently named constructs. Future studies would benefit from a closer examination of different disciplines are examining the constructs of ERI and acculturation. Through the adoption of an interdisciplinary approach researchers will be able to bring the unique insight on different construct definitions, conceptualizations, and methods. Drawing from different academic disciplines will provide a more holistic perspective on the examination of complex developmental processes such as ERI development by bringing together the unique insights form different discipline.

Another limitation of this study is that it relied on results of quantitative studies of ERI development and acculturation and, thus, excluded results from qualitative studies. Future research should, nonetheless, consider the work being done using qualitative approach because it also contributes to the understanding of complicated processes, such

as the differential impact of acculturation strategy on mental health as a function of gender. Although the research questions of this review need continued quantitative review to test existing theory among Muslim-MENA participants, future studies would benefit from the integration of results from qualitative methods. Because of the exploratory nature on qualitative methods, the information gathered from this approach can complement quantitative data and provide future studies with more details to better understand complex processes. For example, a survey can quantitatively identify gender differences in mental health outcomes among participants that adopt different acculturation strategies. A qualitative interview can provide information at individual and group levels to better understand why these differences occur. The addition of a qualitative component, also known as *mixed methods*, will allow for a deeper and more comprehensive examination of research questions.

Another limitation is that only studies conducted in the United States were included. This was done in order to understand the unique context of immigration into American culture; however, this excluded the work of scholars in other areas of the world studying Muslim-MENA communities. Also, this study only included articles that contained participants between the age of 12-25 years old. This could have also contributed to the exclusion of studies conducting work on older or younger populations.

These limitations represent important directions for future research. Future studies should recruit more participants from Muslim-MENA communities to continue to explore the process of acculturation and ERI development in this population. All of the studies included in the final discussion focus primarily on the specific developmental task of ERI

development or acculturation, which is an immigrant-origin specific task (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2018). Both processes are most relevant to the individual level of the integrative risk and resilience model proposed by Suárez-Orozco and colleagues (2018). While it is important to characterize these processes at an individual level, future studies would benefit from considering the many other barriers (i.e. cultural differences, language barriers, and discrimination) immigrant-origin youth face in different contexts.

CONCLUSION

This review acknowledges the unique contributions of the final sample of studies; however, it also recognizes the need for continued study to better understand the process of acculturation and ERI development among Muslim-MENA immigrants and their implications for positive youth development. The findings of this review have supported the protective effects of ERI on mental health. However, there were both positive and negative associations found for the promotive effects of ERI on psychological adjustment and development, which highlights an important area for future study. The findings related to acculturation supported the protective effect of acculturation on mental health but found non-significant results relating to the promotive effects of acculturation. Overall, this systematic review revealed that there is a very limited number of studies that allow to empirically evaluate the existing risk and resilience processes in Muslim-MENA youth.

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