

## **Abstract**

Students' experiences in schools are shaped by the environment the school creates, and therefore fostering strong student-teacher relationships and providing space for culturalism may lead to better student outcomes, including an increased sense of belonging. This study examines the role of race and ethnicity in the relationship between cultural pluralism, student-teacher relationships, and a sense of belonging. We hypothesized that race and ethnicity will moderate the relationship between cultural pluralism and sense of belonging as well as student-teacher relationships and student belonging. Data were drawn from the publicly available School Safety and School-Based Mental Health Services database which surveyed middle-school students' reports of cultural pluralism, student-teacher relationships, and sense of belonging. Cultural pluralism and student-teacher relationships were positively associated with a sense of belonging among all middle-school students. In contrast to our hypothesis, White students experienced greater increases in sense of belonging as cultural pluralism increased in comparison to Black students. These findings suggest that racial minority populations in schools may benefit from increased cultural pluralism, including schools where White students may be the minority population.

*Key Words: Cultural pluralism, school, belonging, relationships, minority students*