School Identification

9

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Abstract

This chapter provides a framework for understanding the integral role of school identification in shaping students' social and learning behavior. In the first part of this chapter, the components of identification (belonging and valuing) are described from a theoretical perspective. Next, the development of identification in students is described, and contextual factors that affect the development of identification are highlighted. These contextual factors are: association with similar others, feelings of safety, being treated fairly, and teacher supportiveness. A model is forwarded that relates identification to student behavior and learning. Finally, behavioral correlates of school identification that explain the direct and indirect relationships of identification with students' academic success are presented. Three assumptions underlie the position taken in this chapter. First, identification with school is "affective"; that is, it involves emotion more than cognition, and it is comprised of a particular set of attitudes toward school and school work. Second, these attitudes shape student behavior and vice versa. Third, identification with school develops over time so that its precursors may be seen in the early grades.

It comes as no surprise that positive behavior is associated with positive attitudes. This relationship is particularly important in the context of school or employment where productive behavior is a consequence of maintaining positive attitudes toward the institution. In school, positive attitudes may be expressed in many forms such as liking, acceptance, attachment, valuing, and perceived supportiveness. Taken together, these attitudes may result in the development of a bond or sense of identification with the institution and positive outcomes are likely to follow. On the other hand, students who fail to develop a positive emotional bond with school are likely to disengage, exhibit dysfunctional behavior, and withdraw from school (Finn, 1989; Hawkins, Catalano, & Miller, 1992; Maddox & Prinz, 2003; Rumberger & Lim, 2008; Voelkl & Frone, 2000, 2004).

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This chapter provides a framework for understanding the integral role of school identification in shaping students' social and learning behavior. In the first part of this chapter, the components of identification are described from a theoretical perspective. Next, the development of identification in students is described, and contextual factors that affect the development of identification are highlighted. A model is forwarded that relates identification to student behavior and learning. Finally, empirical data that support the model are summarized: behavioral correlates of school identification that explain the direct and indirect relationships of identification with students' academic success are presented.

Three assumptions underlie the position taken in this chapter. First, identification with school is "affective"; that is, it involves emotion more than cognition, and is comprised of a particular set of attitudes toward school and school work. Second, these attitudes, like attitudes generally, help shape student behavior and vice versa. Third, identification with school develops over time so that only its precursors may be seen in the early grades. Identification is not internalized in early grades, but becomes established over time under appropriate conditions. Empirical evidence for the second and third assumptions is summarized in the sections that follow.

Identification as a Form of Engagement

Nearly two decades ago, Finn (1989) proposed one of the earliest models of student engagement. The participation-identification model was an attempt to explain how the interplay of school attitudes and behaviors affects the likelihood of academic success. In this two-component model, participation referred to behaviors that engage students in learning activities and keep students on-task. Identification referred to students' attitudes about school, in particular, feelings of belongingness and valuing. Belongingness was students' sense of being a part of the school environment and that school is an important part of their own experience. Valuing was the extent to which students value success in school-relevant goals. According to the model, dropping out of school is a developmental process that ensues when students fail to participate in school or classroom activities and fail to identify with school.

More contemporary views of engagement have broadened the model to include additional dimensions and terms, for example, academic engagement (Appleton, Christenson, Kim, & Reschly, 2006; Johnson, Crosnoe, & Elder, 2001), social or conduct engagement (Hughes, Luo, Kwok, & Loyd, 2008; Pannozzo, Finn, & Boyd-Zaharias, 2004), cognitive engagement (Appleton et al., 2006; Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004; Greene, Miller, Crowson, Duke, & Akey, 2004), affective engagement (Jimerson, Campos, & Greif, 2003), psychological engagement (Appleton et al., 2006; Christenson et al., 2008; Rumberger & Lim, 2008), and emotional engagement (Connell, Spencer, & Aber, 1994; Fredricks et al., 2004; Ladd & Dinella, 2009). The first three terms correspond to the behavioral component in the participation-identification model, that is, behaviors related directly to the learning process and to classroom behavior, and cognitive efforts beyond a minimal investment in learning.

The remaining terms describe affect, that is, attitudes and emotions associated with school and school work. Educators agree that affective engagement in school is important, but research has not clarified its exact role in the learning process. This chapter focuses on affective engagement, showing how affect develops over time as a result of many interactions and experiences including academic performance. Further, affect predicts academic achievement because of its impact on school and classroom behavior (i.e., behavioral engagement) which, in turn, affects learning.

In this chapter, identification is viewed as an intrinsic form of achievement motivation that encourages students to engage in appropriate learning behaviors. Achievement motivation is a "general desire or disposition to succeed in academic work and in the more specific tasks of school" (Newmann, Wehlage, & Lamborn, 1992, p. 13). Motivated students exert effort and persist on academic tasks. Affectively, they enjoy and are eager to approach learning tasks, are optimistic

about the chances of success, and take pleasure in their academic work. Beyond the extrinsic reinforcements provided by teachers and parents, students are motivated by internal factors, in particular, individual needs, values, and goals (for a comprehensive review, see Stipek, 2004). Internalized achievement values arise from precepts conveyed by parents and teachers that achievement is valued. Over time, most students internalize these values and make them their own. Identification with school is regarded as intrinsic motivation, that is, an internal desire to achieve, develop competencies, and take pleasure in academic success. When internal motivation is weak, students are less likely to engage in learning and have successful school experiences.

The Components of Identification

The framework for studying identification as an affective form of student engagement is rooted in psychological theories of human needs (Maslow, 1968) and in theory that explains individuals' need to experience a sense of community (McMillan, 1996; McMillan & Chavis, 1986). Sense of community is a "feeling that members have of belonging, a feeling that members matter to one another and to the group, and a shared faith that members' needs will be met through their commitment to be together" (McMillan & Chavis, 1986, p. 9). Individuals also share a need to feel their actions are worthwhile and to have a sense of competence and positive self-regard.

Both needs are reflected in the components of identification in Finn's (1989) model, that is, belonging and valuing. Both components derive from basic human needs, and both can motivate productive learning behavior. The lion's share of research to date has focused on sense of belonging and closely allied concepts including psychological investment (Newmann et al., 1992), relatedness (Connell & Wellborn, 1991), school membership (Goodenow, 1993), school connectedness (Libbey, 2004; Whitlock, 2006), and school attachment (Mouton & Hawkins, 1996), among other terms. Jimerson et al. (2003) discussed similarities and differences among the terms as suggested by the actual measures used in research studies. This component rests on classic psychological theory asserting that individuals have a fundamental need to belong to groups and institutions (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Maslow, 1968). Outside the home, school and the work place are the most salient institutions for most youth.

Humans also have a need to feel that their actions are worthwhile, that is, of value. This assumption too is based in classical psychological theories asserting that individuals have a need for feelings of competence (Bandura, 1977; Connell & Wellborn, 1991; Deci & Ryan, 2000) and self-esteem based on competence (Maslow, 1968). Both of these needs rest on the assumption that the arena in which a person is competent is important—of value—to the individual or to other people. Valuing can be experienced as a personal sense of fulfillment ("It gives me pleasure" or "I get praise for doing this") or in practical terms as a means to an end, that is, goal attainment. The reason behind the value, however, is less important for identification than the value attribution itself. A person may pursue an activity because of its perceived importance or rationalize that an activity at which she/he is competent is of value, but in either case, it is accompanied by a sense of fulfillment or being worthwhile.

The Need to Belong

Belongingness has been defined as "feelings that one is a significant member of the school community, is accepted and respected in school, has a sense of inclusion in school, and includes school as part of one's self-definition" (Voelkl, 1996, p. 762). The bidirectional nature of belongingness is described by Whitlock (2006) as "[belongingness] is conceptualized as something not merely received (e.g., 'To what extent do you feel cared for?') but reciprocated as well (e.g., 'To what extent do you care about your school?')" (p. 15). Several attempts have been made to compare the terms that have been used in place of or in addition to belongingness (Jimerson

et al., 2003; Libbey, 2004; O'Farrell & Morrison, 2003). By and large, these analyses conclude that behind the multiple definitions, there are multiple similar constructs, each arising from a particular measurement instrument. There is little point in reiterating these analyses here; they are complex and tend to change as new terms enter the field. Instead, this chapter discusses only studies that match the definitions of belonging and/or valuing as used here. It was discovered, however, that most measures of belongingness yield similar correlations with other educational variables (Goodenow, 1993; McNeely, Nonnemaker, & Blum, 2002; Rumberger & Lim, 2008; Voelkl, 1997).

The importance of a sense of belonging can be traced back at least to the classic work of Maslow (1968) who proposed a hierarchy of innate human needs: physiological (e.g., food, shelter), safety (e.g., security, peace), love (e.g., relationships, bonds with others), esteem (e.g., efficacy, mastery), knowledge (e.g., understanding), esthetic (e.g., order, beauty), and self-actualization (e.g., avocation). The first four levels were classified as "deficiency needs," deemed essential for physical and psychological well-being.

Maslow's assertion about the importance of nutrition, safety, and emotional bonds has implications for student success. Recognizing that students who are hungry tend to perform poorly, the US Department of Agriculture provides lunch subsidies for student from low-income homes (Institute of Medicine, 2010). Similarly, federal initiatives such as the Safe and Drug-Free Schools Act of 1990, the Gun-Free School Zones Act of 1990, and the widespread implementation of zero-tolerance policies demonstrate the recent emphasis placed on the health and safety of students in public schools (Cornell & Mayer, 2010).

As with food and safety, the need to feel that one is part of a group or institution also shapes behavior. In their extensive review of belongingness, Baumeister and Leary (1995) summarized evidence that humans are naturally driven toward establishing and sustaining bonds with others. To satisfy this drive, there is a need for frequent, positive personal interactions in the context of long-term, caring relationships. They also provide evidence that the deprivation of belongingness is associated with a broad range of psychological, behavioral, and health problems (Deci, Vallerand, Pelletier, & Ryan, 1991; Newmann, 1981; Ryan, 1995).

These ideas have been used to explain motivation and behavior in the work place and in school. For several decades, management researchers have studied job involvement of employees, that is, "the degree to which a person is identified psychologically with his work" (Rabinowitz & Hall, 1977, p. 266). Identification was indicated by the extent to which success or failure on the job affects an individual's self-esteem. Indeed, successes and failures can affect a fundamental trait like self-esteem only in individuals who feel that the work place is an important part of their own self-definition (i.e., belongingness). The phrases "work engagement" and "job embeddedness" have also been used in place of job involvement, although some researchers have explained that there are subtle differences among the terms (e.g., Halbesleben & Wheeler, 2008; Kanungo, 1982; Saleh & Hosek, 1976; Simpson, 2009).

Despite the use of different terms, empirical research in the workplace has supported two common principles. First, sense of belonging is impacted by structural and interpersonal features of the work place such as management style, workplace safety, and autonomy (Harter, Schmidt, & Keyes, 2003; Kahn, 1990; Lawler & Hall, 1970). Second, sense of belonging is associated with employee job performance, satisfaction, and intention to stay or leave (Kanungo, 1979; Simpson, 2009).

These conclusions apply to students and schools as well, where sense of belonging has been viewed in terms of "school community." A community is both a territorial or geographic unit (a "place") and a set of human relationships (McMillan & Chavis, 1986; Osterman, 2000). According to McMillan and Chavis, community membership serves four major purposes for the individual, "shared emotional connection," "influence," "integration and fulfillment of needs," and "membership," the feeling of belonging. "[I]n a community, the members feel that the group is important to them and that they are important to the group" (Osterman, 2000, p. 324).

Likewise, this two-part description is the basis of Voelkl's (1996) definition of belongingness.

Outside the home, youth spend large amounts of time at school and in classes—from an early age onward. They establish relationships with fellow students and teachers and, for those who succeed, experience the achievements and rewards that ensue. These experiences promote a sense of connectedness or belonging with the institution itself, that is, "the place" (McMillan & Chavis, 1986; Sarason, Pierce, & Sarason, 1990). School is where students come to be with their friends, to participate in organized academic and social group activities, and receive encouragements or discouragements for their successes and failures. Building on McMillan and Chavis's concept of four functions of communities, researchers have proposed that sense of belonging is enhanced in schools where students are active and frequent participants in the learning process, where students develop feelings of academic and social competence, and where students' needs for autonomy, for engaging in challenging activities, and for a social comfort zone are met (Bateman, 2002).

The need for belongingness, then, can be fulfilled by the school community. In turn, through its impact on motivation and behavior, students' feelings of belonging can facilitate academic persistence and performance. According to classic sociological theory, the school serves a normative function, encouraging and reinforcing behavior like that of others in the same setting (Elliott & Voss, 1974; Hirschi, 2005; Polk & Halferty, 1972; Seeman, 1975). Social control theory proposes that bonds to institutions are accompanied by sensitivity to the opinions and behaviors of others and a tendency to emulate those opinions and behaviors. When the behaviors of others are positive and goal-oriented, belongingness provides incentive for students to work hard for the same goals, that is, grades and continuing progress. When the bond fails to develop or is broken, individuals may reject the legitimacy of the institution and perceive it as unfair and alienating. In an often-cited study of these principles, Hirschi documented a causal chain of events from poor school performance to weakened bonds with school to juvenile delinquency.

The connections between students' sense of community and behavioral engagement have been confirmed in a number of empirical studies (Furrer & Skinner, 2003; Royal & Rossi, 1996) and are reviewed in the final section of this chapter. Education researchers have also proposed that a sense of membership in home and school settings serves a protective function that offsets the negative effects of social handicaps (e.g., poverty or a language other than English being spoken at home) (Connell et al., 1994; Finn & Rock, 1997; Maddox & Prinz, 2003; Marcus & Sanders-Reio, 2001; Resnick, Harris, & Shew, 1997). Using home interview data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, Resnick et al. (1997) found that parent-family connectedness and school connectedness reduced the likelihood of a host of health risk factors among 7th through 12th graders including emotional distress and suicidality, drug and alcohol use, sexual activity, and violence. School connectedness was associated (negatively) with adolescent emotional distress and suicidality. Connell and colleagues forwarded a model of contextual and personal factors, including attachment to peers in school and emotional engagement in school on outcomes including attendance, grades, and disciplinary measures. Three studies of 10–16-year-old African-American adolescents were conducted to test these models. Although specific relationships differed among the studies, they all showed that combinations of personal connectedness and emotional engagement were associated with positive education outcomes despite that many of the participants were from low-income homes.

When the need for belonging is not satisfied, diminished motivation, impaired development, and alienation may follow (Connell & Wellborn, 1991; Furrer & Skinner, 2003; see Juvonen, 2006). Sense of belonging may fail to develop as a student matures or be attenuated by experiences encountered in school, for example, unfair or disproportionate discipline or close association with peers who decide to leave school. The educational harm that students can suffer in these situations include emotional and behavioral withdrawal and dropping out.

The Need for Personal and Practical Value

Valuing is feeling that school and school outcomes have personal importance and/or practical importance, that is, that they are worthwhile (Anderman & Wolters, 2006; Eccles et al., 1983; Schiefele, 1999; Wigfield & Eccles, 1992). Personal importance can evolve from an internal sense of fulfillment (e.g., interest, enjoyment, satisfaction from completing school tasks) or external sources (e.g., satisfactory grades, encouragement from teachers or parents). Practical importance is the recognition that school experiences have utility in attaining future goals (e.g., a high school diploma, a particular job, or access to postsecondary schooling).

Theory and empirical research support that students are most likely to be engaged, to expend more effort in the classroom, and to persist in learning tasks when they place high value on schoolwork (Eccles, 2008; Pintrich & De Groot, 1990). To the extent that values have been internalized by a student, they are an intrinsic motivator of behavior and engagement (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Deci et al., 1991). Indeed, one of the earliest theories of achievement motivation proposed that one's tendency to approach success (or avoid failure) is partially a function of the internalized incentive value of success or failure (Atkinson, 1964). More contemporary models show that achievement-related behaviors are related to the value of a task, which is a function of the perceived qualities of the task and the person's needs, goals, and self-perception (Eccles et al., 1983).

Research on values as motivators recognizes the distinction of personal and practical values of school. According to the expectancy-value model of achievement forwarded by Eccles et al. (1983), "subjective task value" is based on perceptions of the task to be performed, namely, its attainment value, intrinsic or interest value, and utility value. Attainment value is the personal importance of doing well on a task. Interest value is the inherent, immediate enjoyment or pleasure derived from engaging in the activity, and utility value is the importance of the task for current and future goals. Students in early elementary grades do not reliably distinguish between the three types of values, but are able to do so by the fifth grade (Wigfield & Eccles, 1992). All three, however, can influence students' task choices, persistence, and performance. Tests of the model showed that students' perception of the usefulness of a subject was related to intentions to enroll in future course work, and that task values predicted career choices and course plans to enroll in math, physics, and English (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002; Eccles et al., 1983). Among middle school students, peer group influence has been related to intrinsic but not utility value. The between-group HLM model accounted for 46% of the variance between peer groups in average intrinsic value. Students with peers who disliked school showed decreased enjoyment of school (intrinsic value) over the school year compared with students who spent time with friends who liked school. However, peer group did not influence student beliefs about the usefulness or importance of school (utility value) in their lives (Ryan, 2001).

In an attempt to explain the attitude-achievement disparity for African-American students, Mickelson (1990) distinguished between concrete and abstract attitudes. Concrete attitudes (practical values) represent the perception of one's probable returns on education from the opportunity structure in society. Abstract attitudes represent the dominant ideology of society that education will bring opportunity. She found that, for African-American students, abstract attitudes were unrelated to GPA, but the more students valued schooling as a realistic means toward future success (concrete values), the higher their performance in school. In addition, research by Schiefele (1991, 1999) showed that individual interest or enjoyment of a topic (personal value) was associated with more meaningful processing of text, use of deep-level learning strategies, and perception of skills. His review of evidence found that although interest was only moderately related to deep-level learning, the relations were stronger than the correlation between interest and surface-level learning (below the .30 level).

In sum, research and theory support the idea that other forms of engagement, and academic

success, are related to beliefs about school activities being worthwhile. Valuing has both a personal dimension and a practical dimension; both provide intrinsic motivation for student engagement. The personal dimension reflects a student's feelings that schoolwork is rewarding because s/he receives pleasure from doing it. For example, a first-grade student values learning to read because she finds the activity fun and feels pride when she demonstrates competence. The practical dimension reflects the student's belief that schoolwork is associated with the attainment of future goals. For example, a high school student values learning new math concepts because she believes that math skills are important for entrance to college. Following their review of research on intrinsic motivation in education, Deci et al. (1991) summarized the combined impact of values on behavior as follows: "For students to be actively engaged in the educational endeavor, they must value learning, achievement, and accomplishment even with respect to topics and activities they do not find interesting… When the value of an activity is internalized, people do not necessarily become more interested in the activity…but they do become willing to do it because of its personal value" (p. 338).

Connections Between Attitudes and Behavior

Social psychologists have long studied the link between attitudes and behaviors and have concluded that the relationship is likely to be reciprocal. The influence of behaviors on attitudes is explained in terms of two prominent theories: cognitive dissonance theory (Festinger, 1957) and the closely related self-perception theory (Bem, 1972). In simple terms, dissonance theory postulates that people who become aware they have behaved in a manner that conflicts with their beliefs tend to form or change their attitudes to be consistent with behavior. For example, an engaged student who enters a high school with a high dropout rate may be influenced by peers to skip school and eventually stop attending altogether. This student has become disengaged from school, and his attitudes are likely to become congruent with his behavior. Experimental research on the impact of behavior on attitudes has shown extensive support for these theories (Olson & Stone, 2005).

Behavior also shapes attitudes through a sequence of events linking the two. A restless student or one with short attention span may attract the teacher's attention due to his/her behavior. If the teacher reacts to the behavior rather than to learning, this may lead to punishment followed by resentment and dislike for school on the student's part. A classic example of this was described by Bernstein and Rulo (1976) who explained the possible consequences of undiagnosed learning problems. If the student is not following the material being presented, she/he may exhibit inappropriate behavior. The more attention teachers pay to the behavior, the further behind the student becomes academically, bringing with it frustration and negative attitudes toward school.

It is also commonly acknowledged that behavior is guided by attitudes. The "model of reasoned action" (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005) asserts that behavior is rational and follows from intentions which, in turn, are shaped by attitudes and beliefs. Salient beliefs and attitudes include the perceived likely consequences of the behavior, and the perceived approval or disapproval of the behavior by respected others. Empirical studies support the connections among the components of this model (Ajzen & Fishbein).

Whether or not the assumption of rationality is correct, the principle of attitudes shaping behavior is seen in many arenas. The needs that underlie students' identification with school in particular—needs for belonging and valuing—are strong motivators of school and classroom behavior and misbehavior (see, e.g., Eccles & Wigfield, 2002; Furrer & Skinner, 2003; Pannozzo et al., 2004; Royal & Rossi, 1996; Voelkl, 1997). Students who have positive attitudes about school are more engaged in school, and those who do not like school are more likely to be disengaged or withdraw (Connell & Wellborn, 1991; Fredricks et al., 2004).

The Development of School Identification

This section discusses the role of identification as a mediator of student behavior. Figure 9.1 is a pictorial representation of theory and research on the development of identification and the ways in which it becomes associated with academic achievement. According to this view, students do not begin schooling with established feelings of school identification. Instead, identification is portrayed as having its roots in relatively simple attitudes developed in the early grades. Over time, early attitudes become crystallized, and the need for external motivators is replaced increasingly by the student's own intrinsic motivation. According to Ryan (1995), through a process of internalization, behaviors that were motivated by external requirements become matters of personal choice instead.

In the early years of school, some behaviors are required and others are encouraged. Parents take students to school, and teachers require them to sit in their seats and follow directions, but responding to questions and even completing assignments (academic engagement) have some level of discretion to them. Also, students learn to cope with having to wait their turn, working well with others, and the teacher-student power structure (social engagement). All of these behaviors are reinforced by extrinsic motivators including teacher praise and encouragement, gold stars, awards, candy, and stickers. It should be noted, however, that the use of rewards for motivating learning is controversial (e.g., Cameron & Pierce, 1994). Early behaviors are accompanied by basic emotional reactions such as liking the teacher, having fun with peers, feelings of safety, and having pride in a picture drawn or work sheet completed.

As students progress through the grades, they exhibit new forms of academic and social engagement. They take increased initiative and persist in completing their school work and establish relationships with teachers and friendships with peers. Peer relationships contribute increasingly to the sense of belonging. As behaviors become habits and habits continue to be reinforced from

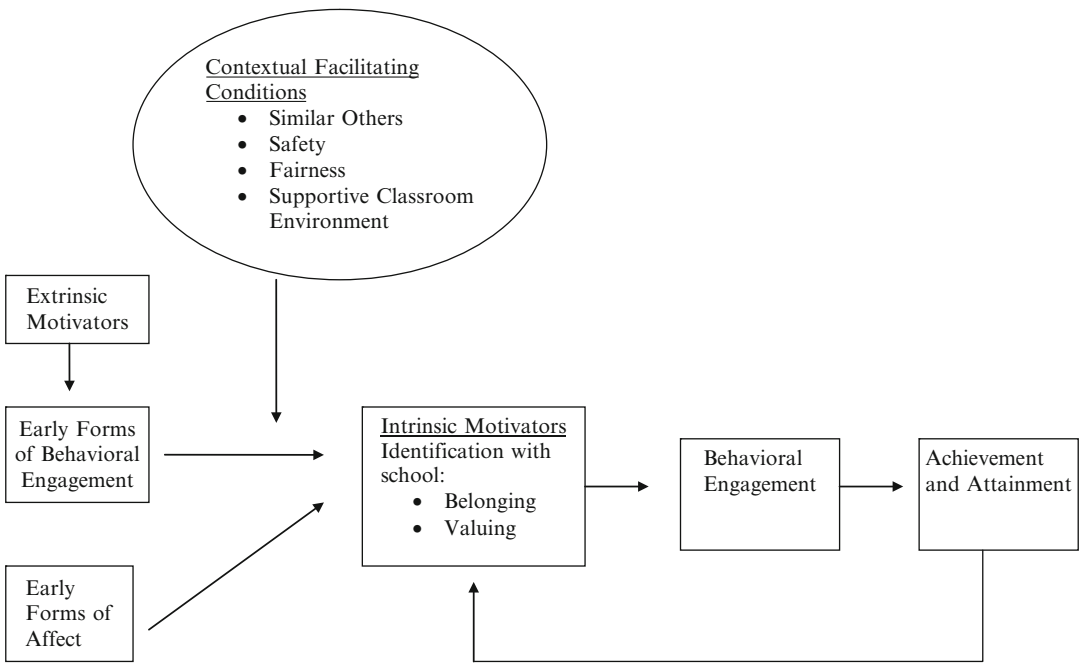

Fig. 9.1 School identification model: development and consequences

teachers and parents or by a personal sense of accomplishment, students increase their sense of belongingness and the value they attribute to school and academic performance. For students who establish patterns of consistent classroom engagement, external motivators are gradually replaced by well-learned behaviors and internal motivation.

Over time and under appropriate conditions, identification with school crystallizes and provides internal motivation for continued academic, social, and cognitive engagement. Because of the academic outcomes that follow, the behavior is reinforced by grades, praise from parents and teachers, recognition from classmates, and also by personal pride and sense of ownership of the skills acquired. Students form deeper emotional bonds with school if they feel accepted by peers, respected and supported by teachers, and perceive that their accomplishments are recognized. That is, continued positive behavior helps solidify students' identification with school (the reverse arrow in Fig. 9.1).

The model portrayed in Fig. 9.1 carries with it three assumptions about student development. First, identification (or disidentification) with school develops over a period of time as the result of numerous interactions, achievements, and other related experiences. The precursors of identification (or disidentification) can be seen in earlier grades. In later grades, when motivation derives more from internal sources, identification with school has a continuing impact on student behavior. That is, students do not begin schooling with a well-developed sense of identification, but early behaviors lead to early affect which, in turn, leads to continued or modified behavior reinforced by more well-developed identification with school.

Second, the development of sense of identification is mediated by contextual factors ("appropriate conditions"), namely, similarity to others in a common setting, perceptions of being safe in school, fair distribution of discipline and recognition for accomplishments, and caring teachers who provide academic and personal support. All of these can be altered, if necessary, to improve school outcomes.

Third, identification with school is ultimately a set of affective responses or attitudes likely to have greater impact on other attitudes or on in-school and out-of-school behaviors than directly on academic achievement. To the extent that attitudes impact learning behavior, the development of school identification can facilitate academic success. On the other hand, the failure to identify with school can create insurmountable obstacles to high performance.

Other developmental models that include identification with school or its correlates have been proposed. These include a social development model used to predict adverse outcomes (e.g., antisocial behavior, substance use, delinquency) from individuals' social bonds with other individuals (Catalano & Hawkins, 1996), and a general model of interpersonal, intrapsychic, and behavioral influences on educational outcomes (Connell et al., 1994). The reciprocal nature of identification and school outcomes was given more attention in a longitudinal study of students as they progressed from seventh to ninth grade (Kaplan, Peck & Kaplan, 1995). Beginning with a large sample of seventh graders attending junior high schools in a Houston school district, the authors found that negative academic outcomes (grades over the previous 7 years) tended to lead to perceived rejection by teachers followed by association with negative peers who, in turn, contributed to further negative academic experiences (grades in junior high school). The study did not identify observable processes that could be altered by school practices to improve students' academic prognoses.

Contextual Factors That Facilitate Identification

Children spend large amounts of time in school where contextual factors play an important role in shaping student motivation. Interpersonal relationships in the classroom, among peers and between students and teachers, are important elements that help individuals meet their basic needs of belonging and valuing. Research has identified four contextual conditions that affect the likelihood a

student will identify with school: association with similar others, feelings of safety, being treated fairly, and being supported by teachers. To the extent that each condition is absent, the likelihood that identification will develop is reduced, along with the probability that students will remain behaviorally engaged. These conditions can be altered by changing classroom and school practices. But much of the responsibility lies in the hands of teachers who are in a unique position to impact feelings of safety, fairness, and student support.

Similar Others

It has long been understood that individuals tend to form relationships with those similar to themselves, whether similarity is based on physical characteristics (e.g., age, weight, racial-ethnic background), social characteristics (e.g., religious origins, attitudes and interests, sexual orientation), or common characteristics of the setting, for example, a common power structure or shared goals and activities (Byrne, 1997; Pearson, Muller, & Wilkinson, 2007; Schug, Yuki, Horikawa, & Takemura, 2009; Ueno, 2009).

When youngsters are free to choose among peers, research has shown that two mechanisms are at work: selection of those similar to oneself and the homogenizing influence of those who are already in one's proximity. However, the classroom lacks the element of personal choice. De facto, it is populated by students who share many characteristics and who are also subject to common underlying dynamics, which can be characterized as "crowds, praise, and power" (Jackson, 1990). Students learn together the implications of being one of many, needing to share space and time, needing to wait for other students to finish their work, take their turns, and give their answers. Most class activities are based on a system of evaluations and rewards for the products students produce; in general, some will be praised highly and others less so, but for responses to the same learning tasks. Finally, the classroom is controlled by one person, and all students are required to behave in accordance with that person's authority.

The same conclusion would be drawn from a school-as-community perspective. Many schools and classes serve as cohesive groups, that is, groups in which members are tied together by many shared characteristics—including shared values—and have an affinity for one another as well as for the group as a whole (Homans, 1974; McMillan & Chavis, 1986). Cohesive groups tend to exert pressure for individuals to conform to group expectations, creating even more similarity among participants. This has been demonstrated over several decades with activities ranging from forming opinions to interpreting ambiguous stimuli to completing questionnaires (Hogg, 1992; Shaw, 1976). From either view, similarity among students in a class or school tends to "draw students in" and foster their identification with the institution and its activities (Bateman, 2002; Royal & Rossi, 1996).

The classroom would appear to be an intense environment for fostering student identification with school. Yet despite the structural similarity of the classroom and social pressure toward similarity, many students do not become strongly identified with school. Some of this may be attributable to school practices that create conspicuous dissimilarities among students. Retaining a student in grade who is then older than most of his/her classmates may cause emotional distress and behavioral or emotional withdrawal (Resnick et al., 1997). Discipline practices that remove individual students from the class group are also likely to interfere with students' sense of identification. On the other hand, looping, or keeping, the same class together for several years can serve increase students' identification with school.

Feeling Safe

When students do not feel physically safe, feelings of belongingness are less apt to develop, while feelings of being safe facilitate the likelihood of identifying with school. This connection has been documented empirically. A mixed-methods study of 350 eighth-, tenth-, and 12th-grade students in the northeastern United States explained school connectedness in terms of a

number of structural and process variables including perceived safety (Whitlock, 2006). The correlation of the two scales for the full sample was .29 (significant at the .01 level), and in the regression, the contribution of safety was significant at the .05 level independently of a host of other variables included in the analysis.

Some fairly common circumstances raise concerns about safety, namely, teachers' lack of control over students' behavior, the presence of gangs or gang measures in the school, and witnessing or being the victim of bullying. Research has connected bullying to identification with school. For example, a group of 517 students in sixth through eighth grade were administered a questionnaire that included a school attachment scale, and scales that assessed the student's attitudes toward bullying, whether friends engaged in acts of bullying, and the students own history of bullying others (Cunningham, 2007). The correlations between attachment and the three bullying scales ranged from .25 to .41 and were statistically significant at the .01 level. Based on the bullying scales and additional information, the students were classified as "bully," "victim," or "neither" (a comparison group). The highest mean on school attachment was obtained by the comparison group, and the lowest mean attachment was obtained by the victims; victims had significantly lower attachment to school than did bullies or the comparison students.

A British study of 364 students in years four through six of primary school provided self-reports of being bullied, of their perceived relationships with the teacher, and of their perceived safety in the classroom and on the playground (Boulton et al., 2009). All participants completed the questionnaires in small groups with a researcher present. The teacher relationship scale included several school bonding questions, for example, "I can talk to my teacher about anything" and "My teacher makes sure I am OK." The main analysis focused on predicting perceived safety, but the correlations reported showed that being bullied was significantly negatively correlated with perceived safety in the classroom and playground and also with the quality of the relationship with the teacher.

Given the salience of unsafe environments to students, it is no surprise that the findings of studies of safety and identification, as well as other forms of engagement, are consistently positive (Bateman, 2002; Ripski & Gregory, 2009). Any safety-related issue that causes a student to be wary and hesitant when going to school is likely to reduce the strength of connection between students and the institution if not between students and their teachers and peers. Eccles et al. (1993) proposed that adolescents, in particular, need to feel safe and have a "zone of comfort" as they transition to from elementary to middle or junior high school.

In the classroom, safety may be construed in another way, namely, safety from ridicule and public criticism. Studies of the perceived supportiveness of teachers sometimes allude to "feeling welcome and safe in the classroom," but few, if any, studies have examined the relationship of this form of safety with identification with school directly.

Fair Treatment

Fair treatment is essential to a student's developing strong identification with school (Newmann et al., 1992), but inequities can occur in several forms. Schools' discipline practices may be unclear, disproportionate to the infraction, or administered unevenly across student groups. Or students may perceive that teachers are biased against them based on personal characteristics such as race, ethnicity, gender, appearance, or ability. Both of these create barriers to the development of a sense of belongingness.

Research reports have documented students' perceptions of negative treatment by teachers and other school staff based on race (e.g., Irvine, 1986; Kailin, 1999; Thompson, 2002). For example, Leitman, Binns, and Unni (1995) found that 64% of nonminority students reported encouragement by teachers or counselors to take high school mathematics and science, compared to 49% of African-American students. Few, if any, studies have documented whether teachers' actual behavior is consistent with the perceptions or the

impact of the perceptions on student attitudes and behavior. Nevertheless, the perceptions themselves may stand in the way of students' feelings of belonging in class or in school generally. According to Steele (1997), African-American students experience disidentification from school because they must contend with negative stereotypes about their academic abilities. "Stereotype threat" arises for African-American students when they are placed in a predicament (e.g., test taking) where they may be treated stereotypically or face the prospect of conforming to the negative stereotype (i.e., intellectual inferiority). This threat pressures students to disidentify from school so as to remove this domain from their self-identity and to avoid the risk of confirming the negative stereotype.

Discipline policies may be unclear to both teachers and students. In a survey of K-12 teachers commissioned by the American Federation of Teachers, 11% of teachers reported that their schools did not have a clearly stated discipline policy, and an additional 50% reported that the policy in effect was not enforced consistently (American Federation of Teachers, 2008). Likewise, a survey of junior high and high school teachers found that 27% did not think their school's drug policy was clear to staff, and 25% did not think it was enforced fairly (Voelkl & Willert, 2006). In terms of students' views, 31% of a national sample of eighth graders reported that their school's discipline was unfair (Rumberger, 1995). A recent survey of school crime and safety reported that 17% of students aged 12–18 felt that school punishment for rule breaking was inconsistent (U.S. Department of Justice, 2007). And several studies have documented that many students—both minorities and whites—perceive that harsher discipline measures are administered to minority than to white students (Skiba, Peterson, & Williams, 1997; Wayman, 2002; Wehlage & Rutter, 1986). In one national study of students in grades six through 12, 9% of white students regarded school rules as unfair compared to 18% of black students (U.S. Department of Justice).

The discipline practices of school hold a lot of potential for alienating students. Unduly harsh punishments (e.g., out-of-school suspensions; zero-tolerance policies) create rifts between students and school and cause students to be absent physically and emotionally. Students who perceive that their everyday behavior can result in punishment are less likely than their peers to identify with school. Indeed, one large-scale study of students in grades 7 through 12, using a self-report measure of school belonging, documented that "connectedness is lower in schools that expel a student temporarily or permanently for infractions more serious than cheating or smoking" (McNeely et al., 2002, p. 140). This is not to say that harsh punishments are not needed, but the circumstances under which they are used should be reasonable, stated clearly, and administered equitably across student groups. Care-based disciplinary practices may be more effective in maintaining school connectedness than are the traditional punishment-based practices (Cassidy, 2005; McCloud, 2005).

If rules and consequences are not stated clearly or not disseminated, then teachers "or administrators" disciplinary actions can be or appear inequitable. "[S]tudents may experience school staff as lacking in consistency or impartiality" (Ripski & Gregory, 2009, p. 369). With these negative perceptions, students are less likely to form bonds with teachers that could dampen their sense of identification with school in general (Pianta, 1999). Using data on sixth- and eighth-grade students in a province-wide survey in New Brunswick, Ma (2003) used multilevel modeling to predict eighth-grade students' sense of belonging from student and school characteristics including students' perceptions of the disciplinary climate of the school (e.g., rules are clear, consistent, and fair). The analysis showed a particularly large impact of school climate on sense of belonging among schools, with an effect size of 5.70 with all other student and school variables included in the analysis. Although perceptions of the disciplinary climate were collected from each student, the analysis included the mean climate rating for each school. Thus, this effect describes differences among schools. The results for variability among students' perceptions would have differed from this.

A Supportive Class Environment

Students need to be in caring, supportive class environments to develop and maintain a sense of identification with school. This principle has been echoed many times over by practitioners and researchers alike (Pianta, 1999). Positive relationships with teachers and peers are necessary to create a positive environment, but teachers are primary in establishing relationships with students, setting the tone in the classroom, providing personal and academic support, and encouraging positive student-student relationships. From a student's perspective, teachers serve as authority figures to be respected, provide a feeling of being a worthwhile and welcome member of the school community, and give reinforcement for personal and academic accomplishments.

The importance of teachers and peers for identification has been confirmed by countless empirical studies. And many of the same teacher qualities that impact identification also affect other school-related attitudes, student behavior, and academic achievement. These are discussed in two broad groupings: teacher qualities that shape their direct relationships with students and behaviors that impact the classroom community which, in turn, affect individual students.

Teachers' Relationships with Students

Teachers provide encouragement to students in three important ways: by showing concern for students' welfare and supporting their school efforts, by articulating clear norms and expectations for students, and by encouraging student autonomy. In early grades, caring teachers come to know each student personally and distribute praise and rewards to all students. These teachers often provide a reason for a child to want to go to school and to try hard to do assigned work. Teachers' encouragement contributes to students' school identification above and beyond support and encouragement from home (Battistich, Solomon, Kim, Watson, & Schaps, 1995; Brewster & Bowen, 2004; Hughes & Kwok, 2007).

In middle grades, supportive teachers may help young adolescents over the hurdles of striving for independence despite the increased structure and impersonality presented by middle or junior high school (Eccles et al., 1993). In later grades, they can encourage students to persist when faced with difficult tasks, serving a protective function against failure (Furrer & Skinner, 2003; Hudley & Daoud, 2007; Newmann et al., 1992; Ryan & Patrick, 2001). Supportive teachers also encourage students to engage in prosocial behavior with other students, which is likely to benefit all students socially and academically (Wentzel, 1997).

Throughout, teachers' expressions of support are likely to be interpreted as a sign of caring. A caring, supportive teacher can impact students' identification with school. In a study of 300 eighth-grade students, Roeser, Midgley, and Urdan (1996) assessed aspects of the school context including close teacher-student relationships, feelings of belonging, affective outcomes of schooling, and academic achievement. The statistical association of student-teacher relationships with belonging was robust: the simple correlation between the two was .35, which remained significant when prior achievement and demographic variables were controlled statistically. Belonging, in turn, was related significantly to all other affective outcomes and achievement with correlations ranging from .17 to .52.

Several programs have been designed to improve student-teacher relationships including First Things First, a school reform program intended to improve relationships and improve instruction by reallocating school resources to achieve these ends (Institute for Research and Improvement in Education, 2002). An evaluation of First Things First in elementary and middle schools was conducted using a comprehensive measure of teacher caring and support and a composite measure of behavioral engagement and identification with school (Klem & Connell, 2004). Students who received optimal levels of teacher support were more likely to be engaged than were students receiving low levels of teacher support. In elementary grades, students with optimal support were 89% more likely to be engaged than were students with low levels of support; middle school students with optimal support were almost three times more likely to be engaged, and

those with low levels of support were 68% more likely to be disengaged. The authors concluded that high levels of teacher support are a resource that students may or may not take advantage of, while low levels of support are a liability.

Teachers also support students by setting clear standards for academic and social behavior and holding students to those standards (Yowell, 1999). The importance of clear expectations was highlighted in a study of 144 third- through fifth-grade students (Skinner & Belmont, 1993). The researchers assessed teacher involvement with students, structure (including clear expectations), support for autonomy, and student engagement including both behavioral and emotional reactions. Although the study did not include indicators of school identification, it showed that teacher-provided structure in the classroom was related to students' engagement across the school year. Further, teachers who provided less support and structure were viewed as less consistent and more coercive (Deci et al., 1991; Reeve, Bolt, & Cai, 1999).

Consistent expectations for all students are also important. If teachers hold differential expectations and display differential treatment for some students based on gender, race/ethnicity, or achievement levels, this can reduce students' trust or receptivity to the teacher as a source of support, motivation, and feelings of belonging. This has been found empirically among African-American students (Chavous, Rivas-Drake, Smalls, Griffin, & Cogburn, 2008; Felice, 1981) and students of Hispanic origin (Rubie-Davies, 2006). In interviews with 56 high school students (Davidson & Phelan, 1999), students were critical of teachers who expressed differential expectations for academic or economic futures across ethnic or racial lines. If teachers hold lower expectations for some students than for others, this can translate into less optimal interactions with those students, poorer academic performance, and disidentification from school.

Appreciating each student as an individual and promoting their individual predispositions supports school identification. This is shown by teachers who respect students' uniqueness and encourage their autonomy (McNeely et al., 2002; Perry, Turner, & Meyer, 2006; Ryan & Patrick, 2001; Skinner & Belmont, 1993; Wang & Holcombe, 2010). In the Skinner-Belmont (1993) study, support for the autonomy of third- through fifth-grade students was significantly related to engagement across the school year. In the study of high schoolers, Davidson and Phelan (1999) found that students were more engaged in classrooms where they felt they were respected for their unique capabilities and interests, and where teachers were supportive of individual autonomy.

Teachers' Impact on the Classroom Community

Teachers can play a role in promoting positive interactions between students and their peers and in creating a caring classroom community. The powerful effects of peers on students' behavior, work habits, and values—especially when youngsters enter adolescence—are well established. For students entering their teen years, the influences of peers may even override those of parents. In school, the presence of positive support from peers can increase identification, and the absence of peer support can hinder its development (Connell & Wellborn, 1991; Ladd, Kochenderfer, & Coleman, 1996; Radziwon, 2003).

Negative peer influences can lead a student to disidentify and engage in dysfunctional behavior. Interestingly, in a study of 331 seventh-grade students in one urban school, Ryan (2001) found that peers affected students' intrinsic value for school (defined to include several elements of belongingness) more than its utility value: "Students who 'hung out' with a group of friends who disliked school showed a greater decrease in their own enjoyment of school over the course of the school year" (p. 1146). Students who engage in destructive behavior may lead others down that path. To the extent that teachers can encourage positive student behavior, these harmful effects can be avoided.

Some research suggests that working in groups increases affinity among students. Interviews with elementary students elicited a number of positive comments about working together including that they learn better themselves and help other students learn (Allen, 1995).

Instructional strategies that create close working groups include cooperative learning and dialogue. Cooperative learning increases student-student interactions and affects learning conditions (cooperative instead of competitive). Research shows that the improvements due to cooperative learning include increases in interpersonal attraction, more prosocial interactions, and enhanced feelings of belongingness (Johnson, Johnson, Buckman, & Richards, 1985; Osterman, 2000).

Dialogue, also a component of cooperative learning, is discussion among students that allows each participant to express their own feelings and opinions while working on learning tasks. Although research is sparse, arguments presented by Osterman (2000) indicate that dialogue in the classroom gives students the opportunity to express themselves to their classmates and to discover that they are accepted by others; it is a mechanism for enhancing belongingness. A study of eighth-graders' perceptions of the classroom environment (Ryan & Patrick, 2001) revealed that teachers' attempts to promote interactions in the classroom were themselves related to increased student motivation and engagement.

The culture of the classroom community generally is also important (Bateman, 2002; Battistich, Solomon, Watson, & Schaps, 1997; McMillan & Chavis, 1986; Osterman, 2000). Research on school communities and students' psychological sense of community are based on the assumption that the basic needs for belonging and valuing are best met in cohesive, caring group settings with a shared purpose. This follows from Battistich et al.'s (1997) description of a "caring school community." The Child Development Project (CDP) is an attempt to create classroom and school communities that enhance behavioral and affective engagement. CDP encourages students to collaborate with other students, help other students, discuss the experiences of others, reflect on their own behavior, develop appropriate prosocial behavior, and take responsibility for personal decision-making (Battistich et al.). The intervention is implemented largely by teachers with support from others.

The original evaluation showed that CDP increased fourth- through sixth-grade students' perceptions of sense of community, an affective measure that includes components of identification with school, with effect sizes from one-third to one-half standard deviation (Solomon, Watson, Battistich, Schaps, & Delucchi, 1992). Continuing research led to the conclusion that students' engagement was affected, not only by individual classrooms, but by school community in general. Paramount among the empirical results was the finding that the classroom practices included in the CDP program were related to students' sense of community and, in turn, "a positive orientation toward school and learning, including attraction to school…task orientation toward learning, educational aspirations, and trust in a respect for teachers" (p. 143). Further, caring school communities appeared to be most beneficial for the neediest students.

The Correlates of School Identification

School identification has been examined in numerous educational and psychological studies, usually in the form of separate components (belonging or valuing). Recent research on the connection of identification with school outcomes is summarized in this section. Some studies purport to measure belonging, bonding, attachment, or connectedness but on close examination do not assess these constructs as defined in this chapter. They are not included in this summary. The studies show that identification with school, being an affective construct, is more directly related to other attitudes and behaviors than it is to academic achievement or attainment. However, the consistency and strength of the association of identification with student behavior is impressive.

The mechanisms through which identification is connected to different outcomes may vary. Identification has been shown to have a direct link with behavioral engagement, with positive identification (internal motivation) prompting positive academic and social behavior (Voelkl, 1997). Misbehavior out of school may result from weakened bonds to school which would serve otherwise to control students' behavior. And identification may be related to academic achievement

indirectly through its impact on engagement in the classroom.

Although many studies consider identification in its positive forms (i.e., more identification associated with better behavior), some examine low levels of identification or disidentification and their consequences. This is seen in the connection between identification with in-school misbehavior and out-of-school misbehavior (e.g., substance use or delinquency). These consequences are of greater concern to educators.

Identification and Behavioral Engagement

Research has shown that students who identify with school are more likely than others to engage in classroom activities, follow written and unwritten rules of behavior, and invest more energy in understanding academic subject matter. It is little surprise that the connections are found consistently in school-based research: classroom behavior is the most proximal outcome of identification of those discussed in this chapter.

Several studies have used Voelkl's (1996) Identification with School scale. The 16-item self-report instrument assesses both belonging and valuing. The instrument was pilot tested on over 3,500 eighth-grade students. Confirmatory factor analysis showed that it could be scored as two separate belonging and valuing subscales or as one combined identification scale; the choice would depend on the particular context in which it was being used. Scale reliabilities were .76 and .73 for the two subtests and .84 for total identification scores.

In one longitudinal study (Voelkl, 1997), academic achievement was assessed in 1,335 fourth- and seventh-grade students, and participation in learning activities and identification were assessed in eighth grade. Of all the demographic and educational variables in the study, identification was correlated most strongly with classroom participation (.30). In an analysis predicting identification from the other variables, participation had the largest standardized regression weight, which was statistically significant above and beyond all other measures. These findings are mirrored in other studies of identification and classroom participation (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999; Pannozzo et al., 2004).

Other studies focused on belongingness. In one, over 1,000 students in three high schools were administered a self-report sense of community scale and a questionnaire regarding their behavioral engagement (e.g., class cutting, thoughts of dropping out, perceptions of class disruptiveness, and preparedness) (Royal & Rossi, 1996). The zero-order correlations of sense of community with all engagement behaviors were positive and statistically significant in each high school. Depending on the engagement behavior, correlations ranged from .17 to .56. In a separate study, school membership was found to be related to time spent on homework among middle school students (Hagborg, 1998). And several studies have found identification to be related to extracurricular participation, but the results were less consistent than those for classroom participation (Eccles & Barber, 1999; Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999)

Conversely, research has shown that low levels of identification affect negative in-school behaviors. For example, in a study of over 800 students in grades 3 through 12, Hill and Werner (2006) used self-report questionnaires to assess levels of affiliative orientation (need for affiliation), school attachment, and aggression. Aggression was the frequency of a number of aggressive acts, out of seven, the student displayed in the past semester. In this study, school attachment was directly (negatively) related to aggression and also mediated the connection between affiliative orientation and aggression.

Both aspects of identification (belonging and valuing) were assessed in studies of school misbehavior, which the authors called "school delinquency" (Jenkins, 1995; Payne, 2008; Stewart, 2003). In one study (Jenkins) middle school students responded to a self-report measure of school commitment. School delinquency was comprised of three indicators: school crime, school misconduct, and nonattendance. School commitment (i.e., valuing educational goals) was a strong predictor of all measures of delinquency even when

a number of background characteristics were taken into account. In a separate study of high school students, Payne measured identification through two scales: attachment and commitment. The study also included a third "belief" scale, but this particular scale does not fall within the definition of identification in this chapter. Delinquency was the number of in-school crimes, out of 13, committed in the past 12 months. Both components of identification were significant: "students who are more attached to their school and teachers…are less likely to engage in delinquency" (Payne, 2008, p. 447).

Identification with school has also been found to be connected with particular types of misbehavior, specifically bullying, cheating, and alcohol use during the school day. A study of "bullies, victims, and bully victims" (Cunningham, 2007) examined bullying and school bonding in a sample of sixth- through eighth-grade students in Catholic schools. Students who were neither bullies nor bullied had the highest average bonding scores. Both groups of victims had the lowest scores, indicating to the authors that being bullied puts students at risk for disidentification from school.

A study of high school students' academic cheating (Voelkl & Frone, 2004) yielded a strong correlation (−.43) of the Identification with School scale with self-reported cheating (defined as cheating on tests, not doing one's own homework, and plagiarism). The results also revealed an interaction between identification and academic performance: students who were less identified with school and who had low achievement scores had the highest rates of cheating of all groups studied. In a separate study of aggression and vandalism at school, Voelkl and Frone (2003) administered lengthy questionnaires to 208 high school students that included measures of aggression and vandalism, in-school and out-of-school alcohol use, the Identification with School scale, and other academic and personality measures. In-school alcohol use, the main focus of the study, was related to aggression and vandalism, but out-of-school use was not. Identification with school was (negatively) significantly related to both outcomes even when demographic and personality factors were controlled statistically. The size of the effects was −.27 and −.32 standard deviations for aggression and vandalism, respectively.

The connection of identification with school with student behavior and misbehavior is found consistently. In no study reviewed except those concerning extracurricular activities was the relationship nonsignificant or could it be considered weak. For the most part, this consistency is found with regard to out-of-school behavior as well.

Identification and Out-of-School Misbehavior

Students who develop positive bonds with school are more likely to succeed in school and refrain from delinquent behavior. Conversely, students who reject school norms are more likely to engage in antisocial behavior (Maddox & Prinz, 2003; Simons-Morton, Crump, Haynie, & Saylor, 1999). Several theories have been forwarded to explain the impact of school attitudes on misbehavior. Jessor and Jessor's (1977) problem behavior theory asserted that due to underlying motives, perceptions, and attitudes, behaviors are linked across contexts. Thus, problem behaviors in one context tend to be related to problem behavior in other contexts. According to this logic, the association of identification with in-school behavior would extend to out-of-school settings. Also, according to social control theory, individuals are more likely to commit delinquent acts when ties to conventional social institutions such as school are weakened (Hirschi, 1969). Thus, students who devalue teachers' expectations, do not value educational goals, and regard school rules as unfair are more likely to commit delinquent acts (Jenkins, 1995; Krohn & Massey, 1980).

Evidence for the association between school bonds and out-of-school problem behavior has focused largely on substance use and delinquency. Maddox and Prinz (2003) conducted an extensive review of conceptualizations, measurements, and theories of school bonding. The authors concluded that despite the multitude of definitions and measures of bonding, higher levels of school bonding have been found consistently to be related to less

substance use and delinquency. School bonding was identified as an important target for intervention in order to protect against negative outcomes and promoting positive outcomes.

Classic sociological work identified identification with school as an important antecedent of juvenile delinquency. Hirschi (1969) used questionnaires to assess attachment to school, parents, and peers, and self-reported delinquency in a sample of 1,200 adolescent boys. In this study, attachment to delinquent friends was found to be associated with delinquency, and delinquency was inversely related to attachment to school. Elliott and Voss (1974) studied over 2,600 students from ninth grade onward, assessing disidentification in the form of "normlessness" and "school isolation." Both factors were related significantly to serious delinquent acts and dropping out of school. Correlations for normlessness ranged from .30 to .52, and from .20 to .30 for school isolation.

In a more recent national study, Resnick et al. (1997) analyzed data from the Add Health survey that included measures of connectedness and a range of negative behaviors. Connectedness was defined as perceiving fair treatment from teachers, closeness to others, and belonging. The authors of this study identified school connectedness as a protective factor for both adolescent substance use and violence. Among both middle school and high school students, perceived school connectedness was associated with less frequent cigarette use, alcohol use, and marijuana use. Also, higher levels of school connectedness were associated with lower levels of violence such as physical fighting and weapon use.

In a review of research on adolescent substance use, Hawkins et al. (1992) identified four contextual and 13 individual risk factors associated with the use of alcohol and other illicit substances. School factors included academic failure and low commitment to school; commitment was considered as liking for school, perceived relevance of course work (valuing), educational expectations, truancy, and time spent on homework. All of the reviewed evidence demonstrated that lower commitment to school was associated with higher levels of drug use.

Shears, Edwards, and Stanley (2006) examined the relationship between school bonding as a "protective factor" and substance use in a national study of students in grades 7 through 12. The measure of school bonding included the degree to which students liked school and their teachers, felt their teachers liked them, and regarded school as fun. Two measures of use were assessed for each substance (alcohol, marijuana, inhalant, amphetamine): having ever tried the substance and level of involvement with each substance. The study revealed that for all substances, greater school bonding was associated with lower odds of having tried the substance and lower levels of involvement. Bonding was found to be more protective for female, white, and Mexican-American students and for students living in isolated rural communities.

The assumption that schools vary in their impacts on substance use lead Henry and Slater (2007) to study the effect at the school level. Using a national sample of students in middle and junior high schools, they examined the effects of both student-level and school-level indicators of school attachment on five measures of alcohol use. A composite measure of school attachment included feelings of liking school and teachers, sense of belongingness, and academic success. Using multilevel modeling, the findings showed that students' own level of school attachment was significantly associated with recent alcohol use, intention to use alcohol, beliefs about peer use, and favorable attitudes toward alcohol use. In addition, a strong contextual effect of school attachment was found. Attending schools where students were more attached was associated with lower odds of recent or anticipated future alcohol use, a decreased perception that students in their school use alcohol, and a stronger belief that alcohol use is detrimental to life aspirations.

While much of the research on adolescent substance use has measured general use (not tied to any particular setting), Voelkl and colleagues have focused use during the school day (Voelkl, 2004; Voelkl & Frone, 2000; Voelkl, Willert, & Marable, 2003). Data from national and local investigations indicate that anywhere between 6% and 25% of adolescents in the USA reported

using alcohol or marijuana during school hours (Voelkl et al., 2003). Teachers and principals are also aware that their schools are not drug free (Heaviside, Rowand, Williams, & Farris, 1998; Mansfield, Alexander, & Farris, 1991; Voelkl & Willert, 2006).

According to Voelkl et al. (2003), substance use in school is largely a function of the degree to which students feel identified with or disidentified from their school and also the degree to which schools provide the opportunity to use drugs. This hypothesis was tested empirically in an investigation of personal and situational predictors of substance use in school (Voelkl & Frone, 2000). The results confirmed the hypotheses; identification with school was significantly related to both alcohol and marijuana use at school, but the effect was moderated by ease of use. That is, school identification was negatively related to alcohol and marijuana use among students who perceived they had ample opportunity to use these substances at school without being caught. When students felt they were likely to be caught, school identification was unrelated to either type of substance.

Identification and Academic Achievement/Attainment

Research on the components of identification with school has typically found weak or indirect relationships with academic achievement. This is consistent with the framework depicted in Fig. 9.1; behavioral engagement is shown as intervening between identification and achievement. Relatively, little research has explored the relationship between dropping out of school and identification although the theory and the limited data indicate that students who become disidentified from school have increased odds of dropping out.

Despite inconsistent findings in general, some studies found significant positive linkages between a component of identification and academic achievement (Goodenow, 1993; Hagborg, 1998; LeCroy & Krysik, 2008). Goodenow developed the 18-item psychological sense of school membership (PSSM) questionnaire and tested it in three samples of fifth- through eighth-grade students. The correlation between PSSM scores and measures of achievement in the three studies were 36, .55, and .33, respectively. All were statistically significant at the .001 level. Hagborg developed a shortened form of the PSSM and tested it with 120 middle school students. This study also revealed a significant correlation (.35) between PSSM scores and grade point averages.

Other studies discovered that the relationship between belonging and achievement was more complex. Ladd and Dinella (2009) followed 383 children from kindergarten through eighth grade, obtaining measures of school liking-avoidance in first through third grade and academic achievement in first through eighth grade. The authors called school liking "emotional engagement." Although it does not fit the definition of identification with school used in this chapter, the items appear to reflect aspects of identification, and the study added an important consideration—the continuity of affect over several years. In a set of sophisticated analyses, the authors concluded that "average levels of school liking-avoidance during the primary grades predicted growth in achievement" (p. 200) over the 8-year period. If identification with school is related directly to academic achievement, it may be long-term growth of identification rather than identification at one point in time that is important.

Wang and Holcombe (2010) used data on over 1,000 adolescents from the Maryland Adolescent Development in Context Study to test structural equation models of the relationships among students' perceptions of the school environment (seventh grade), school engagement (eighth grade), and grade point average (GPA) at the end of eighth grade. The engagement measures were indicators of school participation, the use of self-regulation strategies, and identification with school, the latter including belonging and valuing items. Two conclusions emerged from the study regarding identification and achievement. First, the direct paths from the three engagement measures to GPA were statistically significant with school identification having the strongest impact of the three. Second, the connections

between perceptions of the school environment and GPA were mediated by school identification. It can be concluded from this study that there are both direct and indirect effects of identification on academic achievement.

These studies stand in contrast to others that show only weak, inconsistent, or indirect relationships. For example, Goodenow (1993) reported that the correlations between school membership and grades were lower than those between membership and motivation (as measured by expectations for success and valuing schoolwork). Voelkl (1997) found that identification was more strongly correlated with student participation than with grades; the latter ranged from .02 to .13. Ma (2003) found a negative correlation in grade 6 and a positive correlation in grade 8. Strambler and Weinstein (2010) assessed valuing and devaluing of academic subjects in a sample of elementary-grade African-American and Latino students. They reported that devaluing was significantly related to lower standardized achievement test scores in language arts and math, but valuing was not significantly related to either.

Research on identification and graduation/dropping out also introduces some complexities. For example, a longitudinal Canadian survey of over 13,000 seventh- through 11th-grade students attending low-SES high schools administered measures of behavioral and affective engagement (identification with school) (Archambault, Janosz, Morizot, & Pagani, 2009). The analysis revealed that, of the three, behavioral disengagement was the most highly associated with dropping out. Above and beyond that, dropouts tended to have low scores on multiple types of engagement including school identification. In a separate study of over 2,000 eighth-grade students, Pannozzo et al. (2004) compiled teacher ratings of students' academic and social engagement, reading and mathematics achievement, identification with school, and graduation/dropout status 4 years later. The correlation between identification with school and graduation/dropping out was small but statistically significant (.09). However, in several regressions predicting dropping out from behavioral engagement and school identification, Pannozzo et al. found the effect of identification was reduced to nonsignificance. Even though dropping out is often described as a gradual process of disengagement from school, both of these studies indicate that behavioral engagement is the most important.

Based on a review of a large number of studies of affective engagement and school achievement published through 1999, Osterman (2000) concluded "There is little evidence demonstrating that sense of belonging is directly related to achievement, but there is substantial evidence showing or suggesting that sense of belonging influences achievement through its effects on [behavioral] engagement" (p. 341). More recent achievement studies and studies using newer methodology tended to find positive relationships, but the inconsistencies remain to be resolved. The research on identification and dropping out suggests that identification with school has an indirect effect on graduation, if any. These linkages require further study to understand the processes by which identification may be related to these particular outcomes.

Conclusion

This chapter provides a theoretical perspective on students' identification with school and accompanying empirical evidence. Several themes emerge from this chapter. School identification is as an affective form of engagement comprised of students' sense of belonging in school and feeling that school is valuable. Both components are based on psychological theory that asserts that humans have basic needs to belong and to feel their actions are worthwhile. A host of affective responses to school have been identified as forms of student engagement (Jimerson et al., 2003; Libbey, 2004; Maddox & Prinz, 2003). Terms such as interest, liking, boredom, and motivation have also been used to conceptualize students' relationship with school (Fredricks et al., 2004). Although considerable progress has been made on distinguishing among these concepts, more research is needed on how these affective responses are related and how they are measured.

It is important to distinguish between simple emotional responses to school (e.g., liking school) and more complex psychological responses. Indeed, children who have internalized the value of doing well in school may work on tasks that are less interesting and for which no external rewards are expected (Deci et al., 1991; Ryan, Connell, & Grolnick, 1992).

Identification with school has not evolved when children enter school. Rather, identification develops over a period of time in response to academic accomplishments and failures, and to interactions with parents, peers, and teachers. Identification is preceded by elementary forms of affect (e.g., regarding school as fun, enjoying school) and extrinsic rewards (e.g., stickers, praise) which can lead to early forms of behavioral engagement (e.g., attending school, completing homework). In addition, appropriate school conditions—feelings of safety, being treated fairly, and being supported by teachers—are important factors that help shape students' identification and engagement behaviors. Over time, identification becomes an internal source of motivation for continued engagement in school.

More research is needed to understand the process by which identification becomes internalized. Longitudinal studies or overlapping cohort studies would be particularly useful for understanding the maturation of attitudes and behaviors. Because individual needs change as students progress from elementary to middle school, research should identify critical age periods when attitudes toward school are most vulnerable (Eccles et al., 1993). To what extent are external rewards important to students in elementary, middle, and high school? Is it possible to develop a sense of identification with school in middle school after years of negative attitude/behavior patterns have been established? Finally, work is needed to understand the roles of contextual factors such as a welcoming school environment, student and faculty composition, availability of help for students who need it, and safety in the development of school identification. This knowledge would be particularly important to educators and administrators. Future research should assess the degree to which each factor can be measured as strong, moderate, or weak in a particular school. With proper school conditions and appropriate support, most students can develop the internal motivation that drives school behavior and school success.

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