Bicultural Environments and Positive Student Outcomes in Hispanic Serving Institutions

Carlos O. Calderón, PhD  
Associate Professor  
Marya K. Cota, PhD  
Assistant Clinical Professor  
Sara A. Abercrombie, PhD  
Associate Professor & Chair

Laura M. Rodriguez, MA  
Assistant Clinical Professor  
Marianne W. Fillhouer, EdS  
Assistant Professor of Practice

Northern Arizona University  
Department of Educational Psychology  
School Psychology Program

Hispanic & Latin American Trends in the US

- This population has grown to roughly 60.6 million  
  - Largest minority group in the United States

- As of 2018, nearly six in ten fall within the millennial and younger generations  
  - By 2035, one third of youth population will be Hispanic and Latin American

- As of 2018, Venezuela, Dominican Republic, Honduras, and Guatemala are fastest growing populations  
  - From 2007 to 2018, Mexico, Colombia, El Salvador, and Cubans have steadily declined

(Krogstad & Noe-Bustamante, 2020; U.S. Census, 2021)
Hispanic & Latin American Trends

- Overall, English proficiency has grown
  - Mainly driven by U.S. born individuals

- Spanish use at home has declined
  - Likely due to many factors

- English Language Learner (ELL) and immigrant students have become a growing segment in the student population
  - These students may face particular challenges in development

(Krogstad & Noe-Bustamante, 2020; Benner & Wang, 2014; Berkel et al., 2010; Kohler & Lazarin, 2007)

Hispanic & Latin American Trends in Education

- The growth of this community has surpassed other minority groups in schools
  - Growth in enrollment, school attendance, high school completion, and some college attendance

- Compared to other groups, there remains a significant disparity in overall education
  - Gap in academic achievement
  - Tendency to be overrepresented in special education
  - Least likely to attend preschool and Head Start
  - More likely to drop out in high school
  - Lower representation in 4-year institution and graduate education

(Hispanics are growing as a share of K-12 public school students)

(Krogstad, 2020; PRB, 2010; Eugene Garcia, 2016; Marrero, 2016)
Hispanic & Latin American Trends in Education

- Tend to be lower income and economically marginalized
  - Poor quality education
  - Limited access to quality technology needed for education
  - High turnover rate in teachers
  - Limited community resources
- COVID-19 adversely impacted access to education
  - Disproportionately represented in studies looking at influx of ACES
  - Discrimination and criminalization of immigration
  - Increased risk of mental health concerns

(Garcia-Joslin et al., 2018; Gandara, 2020; D’Costa Rodriguez, 2021; Gordon & Cui, 2018)

Hispanic & Latin American Mental Health Trends

Hispanic & Latin American youth are more likely to experience mental health concerns

- 22% experience depressive symptoms
  - Higher than other minority groups, except Native and Indigenous groups

Latina adolescents have highest rates of suicidal ideation and attempts

- Latino adolescents have higher rate compared to white peers

Disparities of use and receipt of mental health services

- Possibly due to cultural beliefs, stigma, issues surrounding access
- Lack of policy regarding mental health of Hispanic/Latin American children

(Ramirez et al., 2017)
Risk and protective factors for Hispanic & Latin American mental health

- Historical and Intergenerational Trauma
- Trauma History
- Migration Experience
- Family Stressors
- Acculturation
- Ethnic Identity
- Resilience
- Parent-Child Culture
- Language Discordance
- Community & School Stressors
- Cultural and Structural Barriers
- Stigma
- Cultural Distrust

**Biculturalism**

(Romero Marin & Vazquez, 2012; Ramirez et al., 2017)

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**Garcia Coll & Colleagues (1996) integrative Model of minority child development**

- Theoretical and methodological framework for research and practice
- Developed to primarily explain the education gap among Hispanic & Latinx/e youth
- Based on Social Stratification Theory
  - Looks at the intersection of social class, culture, ethnicity, and race
- Challenges deficit focused frameworks

(Marks & Garcia Coll, 2018; Garcia Coll et al., 1996)
Garcia-Coll & Colleagues (1996) Model of minority child development

- Compared to traditional unidimensional models, Garcia-Coll and colleagues' integrative model emphasizes how youth can be situated in different social positions as they reach developmental competencies.

- Depending on context or situation, youth can experience risk and resilience:
  - Promoting and Inhibiting Environments
  - Adaptive Culture

- Along with understanding individual differences, this model can promote youth strengths:
  - Positive developmental outcomes can strengthen school performance

(Perez-Brena et al., 2018; Wang et al., 2018; Marks & Garcia Coll, 2018)
Biculturalism & Acculturation

• 25% of children in the United States are the offspring of immigrants
  (US Census Bureau, 2014).
  • 17.5 million children in the US have at least one immigrant parent.
  • This creates cultural affordances – opportunities to develop particular skills in a particular cultural environment at home, community, school.
• However, growing up in diverse (sometimes competing) cultural environments can also be related to acculturation and acculturation stress (even if not immigrants; e.g., Native American youth).
• Acculturation is the process of psychological change in values, beliefs, identity, attitudes, and behaviors when adapting to a new or host culture.
  • Behavioral
  • Affective
  • Cognitive
• Immigrant and ethnic minority individuals face particular challenges:
  • May not be welcomed; may be isolated;
  • May experience acculturation-related stressors (e.g., learning a second language);
  • May go through a complex identity development process.

According to the United States Department of Education, students of racial/ethnic minority comprise 50.3% of public-school students.
Acculturative Stress

- Feelings of marginality and isolation
- Anxiety and depression
- Hypertension
- Psychosomatic symptoms
- Academic difficulties
- Identity crisis

Family conflict – acculturative family distancing
- Language and communication breakdown
- Values and social norms clash

Biculturalism

- What is Biculturalism?
  - Biculturalism is a special case of acculturation.
  - Biculturalism has been defined as:
    - an acculturation outcome;
    - an acculturation strategy;
    - an adaptation style in response to environmental demands; and
    - a developmental trajectory where the individual integrates identities, values, behaviors, attitudes, and perspectives from their own ethnocultural group and the larger, dominant, or “mainstream” culture.
**Biculturalism among Mexican-American Students**

- **Mexican American Cultural Values**
  - Familism
  - Obligations
  - Emotional Support
  - Representing the Family
  - Respect, emphasis on interpersonal relations, and simpatía (warmth/charm)
  - Religiosity
  - Traditional Gender Roles

- **Mainstream Cultural Values**
  - Material Success
  - Competition and Personal Achievement
  - Independence and Self-Reliance

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**Berry’s Bidimensional Acculturation Model**

- **What is Biculturalism?**
  - Integration

Enculturation to own cultural background & identity

Acculturation to broader “mainstream” culture & identity

Berry, 1990
Acculturation Trajectories & Specific Challenges

- Complex Social Networks
- Competing Value Systems

- Second Language Acquisition
- Discrimination

Bicultural

Separation

Assimilation

Marginalized

- Acculturative Family Distancing
- Peer Rejection

- Identity Crisis
- Isolation

Importance of Bicultural Identity

Why is bicultural identity important?

- Individuals who internalize both the host or “mainstream” culture, as well as their origin or ethnic culture (i.e., bicultural individuals) have better psychological outcomes, including:
  - Higher mental health and life satisfaction (Berry, 1998)
  - Less perceived discrimination (Berkel et al., 2010)
Why Focus on Mexican Americans?

- Hispanic / Latin Americans constitute one of the largest and fastest growing ethnic groups in the United States who often must adapt to both their ethnic context (enculturation) as well as the mainstream cultural context (acculturation).
- Mexican Americans constitute the largest Latin American group in the US.
- MA students are still underrepresented in research.
- Bicultural processes still need to be researched.

Defining a Bicultural Orientation

LaFromboise, Coleman, and Gerton (1993) defined a bicultural orientation as being competent in two cultures, by having the following skills:

- Knowledge of Cultural Beliefs and Values
- Positive Attitudes Toward Groups
- Bicultural Efficacy
- Communication Ability
- Role Repertoire
- Social Groundedness
Study 1: Bicultural Identity & Outcomes among College Students

Method
• Participants
  • 404 Mexican American late adolescents and emerging adults (ages 18-23), undergraduate college students in central California
  • 326 female, 78 male;
  • 345 were born in the U.S, 38 were born in Mexico.

• Procedure
  • 30-minute online survey using Qualtrics;
  • Incentive: assignment credit for introductory psychology class;
  • Screening questions: age, ethnicity;
  • Anonymous participation;
  • Analysis using structural equation modeling with Mplus 7.0.

Measures:
Biculturalism as part of the Self-Concept

• Bicultural Self-Efficacy Scale (BSES; David, Okazaki, & Saw, 2009)
  • Focuses on how beliefs about bicultural competence become part of the self-concept.
  • BSES was our independent variable (predictor).
Biculturalism as part of the Self-Concept

- **Bicultural Self-Efficacy** (BSES: David, Okazaki, & Saw, 2009)
  - **Social Groundedness** (7 items): “I can develop new relationships with both mainstream Americans and people from the same heritage culture as myself.”
  - **Communication Ability** (4 items): “I can communicate my ideas effectively to both mainstream Americans and people from the same heritage culture as myself.”
  - **Positive Attitudes** (4 items): “I have generally positive feelings about my heritage culture and mainstream American culture.”
  - **Cultural Knowledge** (4 items): “I am knowledgeable about the history of both mainstream America and my cultural group.”
  - **Role Repertoire** (3 items): “I am confident that I can learn new aspects of both the mainstream American culture and my heritage culture.”
  - **Bicultural Beliefs** (4 items): “Being bicultural does not mean I have to compromise my sense of cultural identity.”
  - 5-point scale ranges from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.”
  - Internal consistency coefficients: Social groundedness, .895; communication, .861; positive attitudes, .869; cultural knowledge, .842; roles, .725; beliefs, .819.

Outcome Variables (dependent variables)

- **Life Satisfaction** (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985)
  - 5-item scale to measure global cognitive judgments of one’s life satisfaction
  - How much do you agree or disagree with each of the 5 items
  - 7-point scale that ranges from 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree
  - Internal consistency coefficient of .861
**Outcome Variables (dependent variables)**

- **Perceived Discrimination** (Brondolo, Kelly, Coakley, Gordon, Thompson, Levy, Cassells, Tobin, Sweeney, & Contrada, 2005)
  - 17-item scale designed to measure perceptions of prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination based on ethnicity at school and in the community
  - How often specific instances of discrimination occur
  - 5-point scale that ranges from 0 = never to 5 = very often
  - Internal consistency coefficient of .907

- **Depressive Symptoms** (Radloff, 1977)
  - 22-item scale to measure depressive symptoms
  - How often depression markers occurred during the past week
  - 4-point scale that ranges from 1 = rarely or none of the time to 4 = most or all of the time
  - Internal consistency coefficient of .903

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**Structural Equation Model – Study 1**

*The Relation between Bicultural Identity on Achievement and Mental Health*

![Structural Equation Model Image]

Fit Indices: CFI=.921; RMSEA=.076; SRMR=.045
All shown standardized path coefficients are statistically significant at the $p < .05$ or lower level.
The Impact of a Bicultural Identity

- Bicultural Self-Efficacy among MA students predicted
  - Higher Life Satisfaction
  - Less Perceived Discrimination
  - Higher GPA
  - Less Depressive Symptoms
- Lower Income predicted Lower GPA, even after controlling for Bicultural Self-Efficacy.
  - In fact, Income had greater impact on GPA, relative to Bicultural Self-Efficacy.
  - This effect was particularly true for students with total family incomes of less than $20,000.

Study 2 – Bicultural Experiences as a Mediator Variable

Hypothesized Model

- Hypothesis:
  - Positive bicultural experiences (mabs) mediate the relation between bicultural identity (bses) and life satisfaction, academic self-efficacy, perceived discrimination, and depression.
  - A supportive college environment (promoting resilience) / positive experiences among bicultural students will explain the link between bicultural identity and outcomes.
Measures

- **Positive Bicultural Experiences** (MABS: Basilio et al., 2014) Thoughts, feelings, behaviors
  - **Bicultural Comfort (Affect)** (9 items): “Sometimes you may need to interact with other Mexican/Mexican Americans, and other times you may need to interact with Whites (Gringos). Which of the following best describes you?” 1 = I am only comfortable when I need to…; 6 = I am always comfortable in both of these situations.
  - **Bicultural Facility (Behavior)** (9 items): “How easy or difficult do you find… needing to participate in Mexican/Mexican American traditions sometimes, and White (Gringo) traditions other times?” 1 = very easy…; 5 = very difficult.
  - **Bicultural Advantages (Cognition)** (9 items): “For me, being able to speak Spanish sometimes, and English other time has…” 1 = many advantages…; 5 = many disadvantages.
  - Internal consistency coefficients: Comfort, .869; Facility, .881; Advantages, .906.

Structural Equation Model Results

The model fit the data very well: \( \chi^2 (54) = 144.390, p < .05; \text{CFI} = .950; \text{RMSEA} = .065; \text{SRMR} = .037 \)
All shown path coefficients were statistically significant at the \( p < .05 \) or lower level.
Discussion

• We hypothesized that Positive Bicultural Experiences would partially mediate the link between Bicultural Self-Efficacy and four outcomes (life satisfaction, perceived discrimination, depression, and academic self-efficacy).

• However, Positive Bicultural Experiences fully mediated three of those relations (life satisfaction, perceived discrimination, depression), and partially mediated one (academic self-efficacy).

• The results provided stronger than expected support for the role of positive bicultural experiences in promoting positive outcomes, beyond the role of identity.

• Specifically, Mexican American students may have more positive outcomes when they have opportunities to engage in bicultural situations that result in positive experiences.

Hispanic/Latin American students thrive in HSIs that embrace bicultural orientations

MA Graduate Students Research Findings – Student Theses & Presentations

• Mexican American students who are highly bicultural tend to have parents who were born outside the US (Cruz, 2017).

• Bicultural orientation is negatively associated with depression, controlling for age, gender, and parental birthplace (Cruz, 2017).

• Bicultural orientation is positively associated with college GPA (Andrade, 2017).

• Cultural values of familism are negatively associated with depression and suicidality (Flores, 2017).

• The negative link between familism and depression/suicidality is explained (fully mediated) by family cohesion/support (Flores, 2017).
Supportive Bicultural Environments in PK-12 Settings

- Youth benefit from practicing bicultural skills in environments conducive to positive experiences (e.g., schools and colleges embracing multicultural perspectives, bilingual skills, etc.).
  - This process starts at home and PK-12 settings
  - School-based interventions to improve the mental health and academic outcomes should include modules that fortify bicultural skills and cultural values.
  - Practitioners should be familiar with LaFromboise’s model of bicultural competences.
  - Bicultural skills among youth may serve to buffer the negative impact of acculturation stressors.

Bilingual/Bicultural School, Puente de Hozho in Flagstaff, Arizona
Supportive Bicultural Environments in PK-12 Settings

5th Grade State Academic Achievement in Math
- Puente de Hozho Elementary: 40% of Hispanic students were proficient or highly proficient
- Comparison traditional school: 20% of Hispanic students were proficient or highly proficient


From a Reactive to a Proactive Model

School psychology is moving away from a reactive to a proactive and prevention-focused orientation.

Rather than reacting to academic and mental health challenges, we strive to prevent problems and promote resiliency.

In order to effect change, we need to understand how systemic forces, such as acculturation stressors, affect student learning and development.
Research Future Directions

- **Life-Span Developmental Approach:**
  Focus on PK-12 settings, college, and beyond

- Longitudinal research to confirm causal relationships implied in the model

- Expand bicultural research to multiple groups (e.g., Native American students)

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Supportive Bicultural Environments in Graduate School

School Psychology Graduate Program: Supporting Learners from Diverse Backgrounds

- **Respect for Diversity**
- **Creating Safe Spaces**
- **Encouraging Participation and Discussion**
Integrating EDIJ in School Psychology Fieldwork Courses

Intentional efforts through EDIJ framework
Committed to equity and inclusion, and ongoing socio-political concerns
Instilling awareness, cultural humility, and culturally responsive practices

We are successfully piloting an integrated curriculum for NAU Ed.S. Practicum students

An informal survey of 23 NAU Flagstaff students indicated the desire to have integrated curricula and ongoing conversations about EDIJ

Students desire to know not only the content or knowledge of EDIJ, but the action items clearly defined and modeled for EDIJ (e.g., NASP guidelines for Social Justice)

It is more difficult to “retrofit” existing courses with EDIJ, than to construct integrated classes from Syllabus construction to implementation, however if students are highly invested it is possible to add EDIJ (e.g., Doctoral Practicum)

Administrative support is critical to the actualization of integrated coursework throughout all required classes
Systemic Efforts to Promote Biculturalism in Higher Education

- Recruitment and Retention of Diverse Faculty who actively support bicultural learning environments
- Promotion of bilingual and bicultural training throughout professional programs, e.g. School Psychology, School Counseling
- Supporting scholarship that examine the educational impact of bicultural learning environments

Concluding thoughts on HSIs

QUESTIONS?  COMMENTS?
Thank you!

Questions about this presentation should be directed to

Carlos O. Calderón, Ph.D.  Carlos.Calderon@nau.edu