



Perceptions of Barriers to K-12 Academic Achievement Among Latinos in the U.S.

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Research Questions

•Does acculturation affect perceptions of barriers to K-12 academic achievement among Latinos in the U.S.?

•Which measures of acculturation: linguistic acculturation, generation status, or time in the U.S., predict perceiving barriers to K-12 academic achievement?

Rationale

•The study of perceptions is important because perceptions of what factors are affecting the academic success of Latino students may differ between parents, students, and teachers.

•The differences in perceptions may affect interactions between parents and teachers and may also lead teachers and school administrators to implement policies to address low academic achievement based on their perception of the issue without taking into account the ideas and perceptions of parents and students.

Introduction

•Latino students tend to have lower grades, lower scores on standardized tests, and higher drop-out rates, than other ethnic groups (Pew Hispanic Research Center, 2004).

•Many Latino students and parents, especially immigrants, face challenges communicating with teachers and other school staff as a result of language barriers (Gloria, Castellanos, & Orozco, 2005).

•Wojtkiewicz & Donato (1995), found that second generation Latino students had a higher probability of completing high school than third generation students.

•Driscoll (1999) found that third generation Latino sophomores were more likely to drop out of school than first generation sophomores.

•Currently, second generation, native U.S. born Latinos, are enrolling in college at higher rates than first generation or third generation Latinos (Pew Hispanic Research Center, 2004).

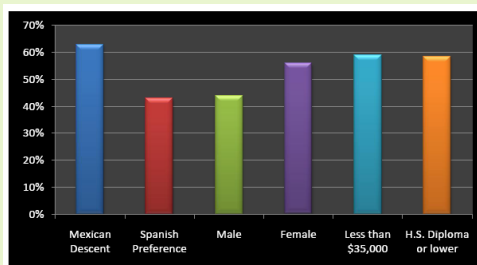
•Second generation and beyond Latino students may perceive greater barriers to higher education from having encountered institutional barriers and discrimination as a result of their minority status (Passel & Edmonston, 1992; Waters, 1990).

Methods

This study utilized data compiled by the *Pew Hispanic Research Center* between August 7 and October 15, 2003, from 3,421 adults regarding their attitudes toward education. The surveys were conducted by telephone between August 7 and October 15, 2003 using a stratified disproportionate random digit dialing sample of the 48 contiguous states. The results were weighted to represent the actual distribution of Latino adults throughout the United States.

Sample

Of the 3,421 participants, 1,508 identified themselves as being of Hispanic/Latino heritage. This study utilized data from the 1,508 participants who identified themselves as being of Hispanic/Latino heritage. Over 63 percent of the participants who identified themselves as Latino identified themselves as being of Mexican descent. Forty-four percent of the identified Hispanic/Latinos were male and 56% were female. The mean age of the participants was 43. Forty-four percent of the self identified Hispanic/Latino participants preferred to be interviewed in Spanish. Fifty-nine percent had annual family incomes of \$35,000 or less and 56.8% had a high school diploma/GED or lower.



Measures of Acculturation

•**Linguistic Acculturation**- measured as a single factor based on the participants' language preference for speaking, watching television, reading and whether they preferred to have the survey administered in Spanish or English.

•**Generation Status**- dummy variables based on the participants' self report.

•**First generation**- immigrants now living in the United States (including those born in Puerto Rico).

•**Second generation**- children born in the U.S. of immigrant parents.

•**Third generation** refers to U.S. born Latinos of U.S. born parents.

•**Time in the U.S.**- based on the participants' self report.

•*How long have you been in the United States?* (1 = less than a year; 5 = More than 20 years)

Potential Barriers

Participants were asked to respond to 6 statements as to why they think Latino students do not perform as well academically as White students. The response options were coded 1-3 (1- Not a Reason, 2- Minor Reason, 3- Major Reason).

- I. Schools are too quick to label Latino students with behavior or learning problems.
- II. Schools that have mostly Latino students have fewer good teachers.
- III. White teachers don't know how to deal with Latino students because of cultural differences.
- IV. Latino parents fail to push their kids to work hard.
- V. Teachers and principals have lower expectations of Latino students.
- VI. Latino students have weaker English skills than White Students.

Results

Multinomial Logistic Regression Estimates of K-12 Barriers

Major Reason	I	II	III	IV	V	VI
L.A.	N.S. (-)	.842+	N.S. (+)	N.S. (-)	N.S. (-)	.727***
1 st Gen	N.S. (-)	N.S. (-)	N.S. (+)	N.S. (-)	N.S. (+)	N.S. (+)
2 nd Gen	N.S. (+)	N.S. (+)	N.S. (+)	N.S. (+)	N.S. (+)	N.S. (+)
Time U.S.	N.S. (-)	N.S. (+)	N.S. (+)	.848+	N.S. (-)	N.S. (-)

Minor Reason	I	II	III	IV	V	VI
L.A.	N.S. (-)	N.S. (-)	1.696***	N.S. (+)	N.S. (+)	N.S. (-)
1 st Gen	N.S. (-)	N.S. (-)	N.S. (+)	N.S. (-)	N.S. (-)	.593***
2 nd Gen	N.S. (-)	N.S. (+)	N.S. (+)	N.S. (-)	N.S. (-)	N.S. (-)
Time U.S.	N.S. (-)	1.188+	1.178+	N.S. (-)	N.S. (-)	N.S. (-)

Estimates are odd ratios predicting choosing Major Reason or Minor Reason versus Not a Reason, Latino students to not perform as well academically as White students.

*** p<.001, **p<.01, *p<.05, +p<.10, N.S. --->not significant.

Reference category for generation status = *Third Generation*

Models also controlled for gender, age, level of academic achievement, and SES (not presented)

Conclusion

- Results indicate that different measures of acculturation do have affect participants' perceptions of barriers to academic success among Latino students.
- Linguistic Acculturation and Time in the U.S. were the measures of acculturation that best predicted the perceptions of barriers in this study.
- Results indicate that although participants perceived some of the barriers identified in the literature as affecting the academic achievement of Latino students, different measures of acculturation and different levels of acculturation within those measures, affected what was perceived as a barrier and whether it was seen as a major or minor barrier.
- The limited number of significant results may be the result of a limitation of the study which failed to capture an "Other" category that participants may have perceived as a greater barrier to academic success among Latinos than the 6 statements used in this study.
- The study of perception of barriers to academic achievement is important because perceptions are often based in reality.
- It is therefore important that school social workers work in collaboration with parents, students, teachers, and administrators to examine the perception of barriers to academic achievement and take into account how acculturation can affect perceptions of barriers, in order to develop appropriate interventions to address the identified barriers.