

Family Acculturation, Family Leisure Involvement, and Family Functioning among Mexican-Americans

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The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between acculturation and family leisure involvement and aspects of family functioning (cohesion and adaptability) from Mexican-American parent, youth, and family perspectives. Acculturation was measured using the Bidimensional Acculturation Scale for Hispanics (BAS), family leisure involvement was measured using the Family Leisure Activity Profile (FLAP), and family functioning was measured using the Family Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation Scales (FACES II). The sample was obtained from communities in Texas and Utah and consisted of 74 Mexican-American families, including a parent and child from each family. After adjusting for sociodemographic variables, the independent variables were found to help discriminate levels of acculturation for parents, youth, and families. Recommendations are given for commercial and community recreation programs targeting Mexican-American families, in addition to implications for further research.

KEYWORDS: *Family acculturation, family functioning, family leisure involvement.*

Introduction

According to the 2003 US Census, Hispanics make up 13.7% of the population in the United States and are the nation's largest minority group. Out of those, the majority are Mexican-Americans (US Bureau of the Census, 2003). As the population of Hispanics grows in the United States, a greater understanding of cultural characteristics, basic values, attitudes, expectancies, and social behaviors is needed (Marín & Marín, 1991). Researchers need to consider the "dearth of family research" on minority groups if their "work is to remain relevant to policy makers or professionals who work directly with families and children" (McLoyd, Cauce, Takeuchi, & Wilson, 2000, p. 1083). McLoyd et al. claim that of all family research, about 10% focus on African-Americans with even less examining characteristics of Hispanic families. Of the Hispanic studies, including research on Mexican-

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Americans, many have examined issues related to acculturation (McLoyd et al.).

Acculturation involves adapting one's culture of origin to that of a new culture, and is seen through behavioral and attitudinal changes (Antshel, 2002; Berry, 1980; Corsini, 1987; Marín & Marín, 1991; Rogler, Cortés, & Malgady, 1991). Dumka and Roosa (1997) suggest that acculturation should not be confused with length of time in a country or generational status, but that it is different for each person or family. The amount of first-hand contact and interaction an immigrant has with services, schools, media, people, and the community in the dominant culture affects their acculturation level. For Mexicans who immigrate to the United States, acculturation is the process of changing their culture to the dominant culture found in the United States.

During the past two decades, studies on acculturation have emphasized the individual adult perspective. Padilla (1980) stated, "the individual has become important in the study of acculturation because we now fully recognize that the individual is crucial in whatever change that occurs through contact between differing cultural orientations" (p. 2). Many scholars, however, consider the family to be the single most important institution among Hispanics (Diaz-Loving & Draguns, 1999; Gil-Rivas, Greenberger, Chen, & Lopez-Lena, 2003; Gonzalez-Forteza, Salgado de Snyder, & Andrade Palos, 1993; Rubel, 1970). Grebler, Moore, and Guzman (1970) suggested that understanding stability and change in the family is critical to understanding any society. Yet, few if any researchers have examined acculturation from the Mexican-American family perspective. Therefore, research examining Mexican-American parent, youth, and family perspectives of acculturation seems necessary.

Review of Literature

Background

Historically, acculturation has been viewed from various frameworks with the most common being assimilation. Assimilation is described by identifying a person on a continuum leading to two possible destinations—either the culture of origin or the new culture being encountered. This theory holds that as immigrants to the United States become more culturally similar to Anglos they lose an equal amount of their culture of origin. Researchers (Buriel, 1993; Marín & Gamba, 1996; Ramirez, 1983; Sabogal et al., 1987) have disagreed with the assimilation theory claiming that individuals can keep characteristics of both the new culture and the culture of origin. They have described acculturation in three stages: low acculturation, high acculturation, and biculturalism. Low acculturation is the guarding or maintaining of the culture of origin with little or no acculturation into the dominant culture. High acculturation is integrating well into the dominant culture while forgoing the individual's culture of origin. Biculturalism is the concept that a person can become acculturated to the dominant culture, but still

retains aspects of one's culture of origin. One weakness of past acculturation research, however, is that few if any studies have reported empirical findings operationalizing low, high, and bi acculturation. Therefore, an empirical study identifying behavioral factors within the low, high, and bi acculturation framework would be beneficial.

As stated before, researchers (Antshel, 2002; Berry, 1980; Corsini, 1987; Keefe, 1980; Marín & Marín, 1991; Rogler et al., 1991) define acculturation as the process of changing from one's original culture to a new culture and can be seen through an individual's attitudinal and behavioral changes. For purposes of this study, family acculturation is similarly defined as the process involved in changing a family's culture of origin to another culture and can be seen through attitudinal and behavioral changes in the family. Some of the attitudinal and behavioral changes related to culture may include beliefs, norms, myths, spirituality, customs, religiosity, and leisure (Nagel, 1994).

Acculturation and Leisure Involvement

Although studies describing the relationship between an individual's leisure and acculturation are increasing (Allison, 1988; Floyd & Gramann 1993; Floyd, Gramann, & Saenz, 1993; Floyd, 1998; Ryska, 2001; Shaull & Gramann, 1998; Stodolska & Yi, 2003), few if any studies have examined family leisure behavior and acculturation. Studies on Mexican-Americans indicate that changes are occurring in leisure behavior as a result of acculturation. Floyd and Gramann examined the effects of Mexican-American acculturation on outdoor recreation patterns and found that "the effects of acculturation were expressed not so much in which outdoor recreation areas were visited as they were in which types of activities were chosen" (p. 15). Low acculturated Mexican-Americans took part in significantly fewer outdoor recreation activities including water/snow-based, urban, consumptive, and travel-oriented leisure than Anglo-Americans. Bicultural Mexican-Americans participated in significantly fewer water/snow-based and travel-oriented activities than Anglo-Americans, while high acculturated Mexican-Americans were not significantly different in any activity except snow/water-based activities when compared to Anglo-Americans. Floyd and Gramann suggested that in some instances low acculturated Mexican-Americans may preserve their culture through maintaining leisure patterns similar to that of their country of origin. Over many generations, however, Mexican-Americans changed their leisure behavior and cultural characteristics to match that of the Anglo-American culture.

In another study, Floyd et al. (1993) examined the effects of acculturation on the use of outdoor recreation areas and found that low acculturated Mexican-Americans did differ significantly from Anglo-Americans in their use of 3 of 13 designated recreation areas. Acculturation was the second most important variable, behind education, in explaining the variations in overall participation at outdoor recreation areas between Anglo- and Mexican-Americans. Low acculturated Mexican-Americans appeared to choose leisure

patterns and recreational areas more similar to their original culture and surroundings. It is possible that by maintaining similar leisure patterns to their original culture, these Mexican-Americans may not acculturate as quickly as Mexican-Americans who adopt leisure patterns found in the dominant culture.

In another line of research, Hutchison and Fidel (1984) found that Mexican-Americans spent more time in sedentary activities such as picnicking and watching sports than Anglo- or African-American populations. They also discovered that Mexican-Americans spent more time in family groups than Anglo populations. By conducting observations in 18 Chicago public parks they found that "the average size of the participating group was 2.5 persons for Anglos and 5.7 for Mexican-Americans" (p. 346). The researchers suggested that the various ages of individuals and presence of both genders within Mexican-American groupings indicated family units. Hutchison (1987) later reported that Mexican-Americans were 2.5 times more likely to be in a family group than were Anglo- or African-Americans.

Carr and Williams (1993) supported the findings of Hutchison and Fidel (1984) on family-orientation of Mexican-American leisure by comparing social group composition of Anglo, Central, and Mexican-American populations at four sites in two National Forests in Southern California. Findings indicated that Mexican-Americans were more likely to be at a site with immediate and extended family than either Central- or Anglo-Americans. Although such findings have consistently indicated the importance of family leisure to Mexican-Americans, the research on acculturation and leisure involvement has continued to focus on the individual. In addition to studies on leisure and acculturation, some research has examined family functioning and acculturation.

Family Functioning and Acculturation

Studies on family functioning and acculturation of Mexican-American families have produced varied results (Vega et al., 1986; Rueschenberg & Buriel, 1989). Vega et al. utilized a family systems framework, specifically Olsen's (1986) Circumplex Model, to examine family functioning and acculturation. The model suggests that family functioning is based primarily on the dimensions of family cohesion and family adaptability. Vega et al. found differences in family adaptability between Anglo-Americans and Mexican-Americans. When compared to Anglo-Americans, findings suggested that Mexican-Americans as a group tended to score on the high end of family adaptability, meaning that they may be more flexible in dealing with new situations or solving problems. Being highly adaptable would allow Mexican-American families to be more flexible with household chores and responsibilities or even family leadership while they try to adjust to the Anglo-American lifestyle. Interestingly, level of acculturation for Mexican-Americans was not significantly related to family adaptability or family cohesion.

In another study, Rueschenberg and Buriel (1989) utilized an open system view within a family systems perspective to examine family functioning and acculturation. The open system view was operationalized through internal versus external aspects of family functioning. Internal aspects of family functioning included family relationships and interactions in addition to the family structure. External aspects involved the family's interactions with American institutions (such as public schools) and the family's internalization of societal norms (e.g., manners at a dinner table). Interestingly, they found no significant relationship between internal aspects of family functioning and acculturation, meaning that as Mexican-American families acculturated, their family relationships and interactions did not significantly change. In contrast, a significant relationship was found between acculturation and external aspects of family functioning. As Mexican-American families acculturated they became progressively more involved with the United States society. In other words, Mexican-American families became more involved in the dominant society, but retained similar family structure, relationships, and interactions found in their culture of origin.

Comparing results from these studies created an unclear picture of the relationship between acculturation and family functioning. One study (Vega et al., 1986) found no relationship between levels of acculturation with family adaptability and family cohesion, while the other study (Rueschenberg & Buriel, 1989) indicated a relationship between levels of acculturation and a family's interactions with societal institutions, structures, and norms. With contradictory findings, further studies are needed to clarify the relationship between levels of acculturation and family functioning.

Purpose of the Study

Although researchers have consistently reported correlations between leisure involvement and acculturation for individuals, they have not examined the contribution of family leisure involvement to perceptions of family acculturation. Given the consistent reports of a family focus in leisure involvement among Mexican-American families (Carr & Williams, 1993; Hutchison & Fidel, 1984), it appears that such research is warranted. Furthermore, the reported relationship between aspects of family functioning should also be considered in any effort to further explore acculturation, particularly among families.

Therefore, the purpose of this study was to conduct an exploratory investigation that examined the contribution of family leisure involvement and family functioning to perceptions of family acculturation among Mexican-American families utilizing a low, high, bi acculturation framework. It was hypothesized that family leisure involvement and aspects of family functioning would be related to level of acculturation. Parent, adolescent, and family level measurements were utilized. Family level measurements were created to examine joint perspectives as well as discrepancies in perspectives. As part of the exploratory study, the relationship of family leisure involvement and

family functioning variables was examined after adjusting for sociodemographic variables to see if they could discriminate between different levels of acculturation (low, high, and bi) among Mexican-American families. Based on previous literature with individuals it was hypothesized that core and balance family leisure involvement would be related to level of acculturation, where increased core would be associated with lower acculturation and increased balance would be associated with higher acculturation.

Methods

Sample

The sample consisted of Mexican-American families ($n = 74$) with at least one child between the ages 11-15. Most of the parent respondents were female (77%) while the adolescents were divided more evenly between genders with 55.4% being male. The total sample consisted of 148 Mexican-American individuals. The parents' ages ranged from 28 to 65 years ($M = 38.8$, $SD = 6.77$), while the adolescents' ages ranged from 11 to 15 years ($M = 13.0$, $SD = 0.91$). A majority of the parents were married (75.7%), while 10.8% of the parents were divorced and the remaining 13.5% were either separated, widowed, or living with a partner. Parents who had ever been divorced comprised 25.7% of the sample. Family sizes for the sample ranged from 2 to 11 ($M = 5.19$, $SD = 1.67$). The majority (63.6%) of parents had some high school (28.4%) or college education (35.2%). Annual family incomes ranged from less than \$10,000 to \$60,000-\$69,999 with the average family income ranging from \$30,000-\$40,000. Over half of the sample (56.8%) reported an annual income between \$20,000 and \$40,000. The majority of the parent respondents (64.9%) were 1st generation residents of the United States (they were born in Mexico). The remainder of the parents included 2nd generation (8.1%, at least one parent of subject was born in the US), 3rd generation (8.1%, both parents of the subject were born in the US), 4th generation (9.5%, at least one of the subjects' grandparents was born in the US), and 5th generation (9.5%, all of the subjects' grandparents were born in the US) subjects. Generations, for this study, were defined using a system created by Cuéllar, Arnold, and Maldonado (1995).

Procedures

Data were obtained through home visits to Mexican-American families recruited through the public school system and a snowball technique in Bexar County, Texas. Door-to-door solicitation and the snowball technique were used to recruit Mexican-American families in Utah and Salt Lake Counties in Utah. Subjects sampled in Texas included 37 parents and their adolescent children. The sampling from Utah included 37 Mexican-American parents and their adolescent children.

Several school districts in Texas were contacted with concentrations of Mexican-American populations. An administrator from a particular school

district indicated that their region had been used in previous research projects and was representative in terms of sociodemographics for the general population in Texas. Mexican-American students from three middle schools were given a brief description of the study to be read by themselves and at least one parent. Those interested in the study were then asked to write contact information on the bottom of the form indicating the times at which they could be contacted. Students returned the contact information sheet to their school and appointments were made with those families.

Contact information sheets were given to 300 students with 33 completing the form. Of the families who returned the contact information sheet, 13 families completed the questionnaire, while 3 families scheduled but were not available when visited, 7 families were not able to be contacted, and 10 families indicated they did not want to participate in the study. The families who participated in the study who were contacted through the schools (13 or 35%) made up the smaller portion of the sample from Texas. All other individuals in Texas (24 or 65%) were encountered through door-to-door contact and the snowball technique. To administer the snowball technique, the researcher asked those who had participated in the study if they had the name of a friend, neighbor, or other family member for the researcher to contact. Those subjects who offered information leading to a completed questionnaire were given a gift certificate to an attraction in the area.

In Utah, school districts did not grant permission to access families through the public school system. Therefore, the researcher went to residential areas with high concentrations of Mexican-Americans and solicited assistance with the project through door-to-door visitations. The snowball technique was then applied to find other subjects for the study.

Given the exploratory nature of this study, convenience sampling methods were applied to learn more about these topics. Few studies have combined an adolescent and parent perspective of family life to create a more complete family view. Additionally, few if any studies have explored the family perspective of acculturation or Mexican-American family leisure involvement. It must be recognized, however, that there are inherent limitations to such sampling methods. It is less likely that the sample be completely representative of the total population than when using random sampling methods. For example, in the current sample the majority of parent respondents were female which may have introduced a female bias in the parent data. It is also possible that a self selection bias may have uniformly influenced responses.

Instrumentation

The research questionnaire included the following: 24-item Bidimensional Acculturation Scale for Hispanics (BAS) which measures Hispanic and Anglo domains (Marín & Gamba, 1996); 30-item Family Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation Scales II (FACES II) which measures family cohesion,

adaptability, and total family functioning (Olsen et al., 1992); the 42-item Family Leisure Activity Profile (FLAP) which measures family leisure involvement based on the Core and Balance Model of Family Leisure Functioning (Zabriskie, 2001); and demographic data.

Bidimensional acculturation scale for hispanics. The BAS was created to overcome some of the shortcomings of past acculturation scales (Marín & Gamba, 1996). Some of these shortcomings included scales that measure acculturation in a unidimensional manner, or provide an acculturation score that is unidimensional in nature. An example of this may be a scale that indicates that as individuals gain similar characteristics to the new culture they lose an equal proportion of their native cultural characteristics. Cuéllar, Arnold, and Maldonado (1995) acknowledged that their popular instrument, the Acculturation Rating Scale for Mexican Americans (ARSMA), had limitations such as measuring acculturation along a continuum with Mexican culture on one side and American culture on the other. Cuéllar et al. commented "The major criticism of this linear model is that the two poles are not independently measured; as one consequence, it does not yield measures for those biculturals who score high or low in both cultures" (p. 276).

A solution to the problem of unidimensionality was the creation of the BAS which measures biculturalism with 12-items focusing on the Hispanic domain and 12-items examining the Anglo domain. Individuals who score high on the Hispanic and Anglo domains are considered bicultural. Individuals who score high on the Hispanic domain and low on the Anglo domain are labeled as low acculturated. Lastly, a person who scores high on the Anglo and low on the Hispanic domain is considered to be highly acculturated.

After tests of reliability and concurrent validity for the BAS, Marín and Gamba (1996) found that the language based items showed good psychometric properties. Mexican-Americans showed high internal consistency for the three language-related subscales with $\alpha = .93$ for Hispanic domain and $.97$ for Anglo domain. Evidence of concurrent validity for the BAS was obtained through a method similar to that used by other researchers of acculturation (Cuéllar et al., 1995). Marín and Gamba found that "all of the language-based subscales showed high correlations with the various validated correlates with the exception of the correlations in the Electronic Media subscale" (p. 304).

Marín and Gamba (1996) advised those who use the BAS to put the 24-items in random order. The BAS is based on a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 4. For example, the first item asks, "How often do you speak English?" and responses include the following: "almost always" (4); "often" (3); "sometimes" (2); "almost never" (1). Scoring for the scale requires the researcher to average the answers to the 12-items in each domain (Hispanic and Anglo) for each respondent. Each respondent then has two scores: the Hispanic domain and the Anglo domain. Scores range from 1 to 4 for each cultural domain. Marín and Gamba suggested that level of acculturation can be obtained by using the cutoff of 2.5 to indicate low or high level of adherence

to each domain. Scores of 2.5 or higher in both domains indicated the individual was bicultural.

For purposes of the study, those who scored 2.5 or higher on Anglo domain and 2.5 or lower on Hispanic domain were considered to be highly acculturated. The individuals who scored 2.5 or above on both domains were considered bicultural. Lastly, those individuals who scored 2.5 or higher on Hispanic domain and lower than 2.5 on Anglo domain were considered low acculturated.

Family adaptability and cohesion scale. The Family Adaptability and Cohesion Scale-FACES II (Olsen, 1993) is a 30-item scale used to measure perceptions of family cohesion and adaptability, in addition to providing an indicator of overall family functioning. The instrument is divided into 16 cohesion items and 14 adaptability items that use a Likert scale ranging from 1 (almost always) to 5 (almost never). Items from this scale ask the respondent how frequently the individual perceives their family to act in certain situations. Family cohesion and adaptability scores are calculated by utilizing the linear scoring formula provided by Olsen et al. (1992) that adds and subtracts items based on positive and negative framing. After obtaining cohesion and adaptability scores, corresponding 1-8 values are assigned based on Olsen et al.'s "linear scoring and interpretation" (p. 12) scale. By adding these values and then dividing by two, a score based on a 1-8 scale can be obtained that is used as a general indicator of overall family functioning. Family level scores were created by calculating the mean of the parent and child score for family cohesion, family adaptability, and overall family functioning.

The FACES II has demonstrated good internal consistency, test-retest reliability, face validity, content validity, and concurrent validity. The two national samples for internal consistency measures have yielded Cronbach's Alpha figures of .88 and .86 for cohesion, and .78 and .79 for adaptability (Olsen et al., 1992). The test-retest reliability scores were obtained by administering FACES II with a four to five week lapse between tests and reported coefficients were .83 for cohesion, and .80 for adaptability. The FACES II has been found to have good evidence of face and content validity. Hampson, Hulgus, and Beavers (1991) reported that FACES II had high concurrent validity with the Dallas Self-Report Family Inventory (SFI). Results indicated correlations between the SFI global measure of family health and FACES II of .93 for cohesion and .79 for adaptability.

Family leisure activity profile. The Family Leisure Activity Profile (FLAP) is an instrument that measures family leisure involvement based on the Core and Balance Model of Family Leisure Functioning (Zabriskie, 2000) and asks respondents to indicate their family participation across 16 activity categories. These 16 activity types are divided in half with 8 items related to core family leisure patterns and 8 items related to balance family leisure patterns. Core family leisure patterns are consistent, accessible, common, inexpensive, and often home-based (Zabriskie, 2001). They include activities such as reading a book together, playing card games, gardening, and eating together as

a family. Balance family leisure patterns include activities that are novel, usually out of the home, and less spontaneous (Zabriskie, 2001) such as family vacations, camping trips, and special events.

Each item in the FLAP asks if the respondent participates in a specified activity type with family members. For each question, specific activities are given as examples to help clarify and delineate between categories. If a respondent answers yes to a question, they then must estimate how often the activity is performed and for how long the activity is done using ordinal scales. The FLAP is scored by multiplying frequency and duration of participation in each category, then summing the core and balance items to get core and balance family leisure involvement scores. The total family leisure involvement score is a sum of the core and balance indices. The FLAP has been found to have adequate reliability and validity (Zabriskie, 2001). The instrument has demonstrated evidence of construct validity and content validity, as well as inter-rater and test-retest reliability for core ($r = .74$), balance ($r = .78$), and total family leisure involvement ($r = .78$) (Freeman & Zabriskie, 2003).

Sociodemographics. When studying Hispanic populations, Marín and Marín (1991) suggested gathering demographic information on participant's gender, age, educational level, income level, and generational status. Family size and marital status were added in this study since the focus was on families. Sociodemographic variables were used as adjusting factors on acculturation of parents, youth, and families. Sociodemographic information was collected from the parent participants and the youth participants provided their age and gender. Categorical variables were dummy coded, and continuous variables remained in the state in which they were collected.

Family level perspective. In the current study, mean scores were also calculated from the parent and child scores to represent a family perspective (Zabriskie, 2000). Mean family level scores are useful for those families in which the family members have similar scores. To account for families in which the parent and adolescent respond quite differently, a discrepancy score was created to allow family members who have extremely different opinions to be expressed and provide greater insight into the family perspective. Zabriskie suggested that both the mean and discrepancy scores can provide a more accurate view of a family variable.

Translation of research instruments. The BAS, FACES II, and FLAP were double translated as suggested by Marín and Marín (1991). Double translating required that the instrument be translated by at least two bilingual individuals who work independently in the process. For this project, the instrument was translated from English to Spanish by one translator. After the instrument was translated into Spanish it was then translated back into English by the other translator. This process then required the researcher to compare the original English version of the instrument with the new English version that was created from the Spanish translation. The researcher found no inconsistencies in word meaning for items in these instruments. Cultural sensitivity was addressed by replacing descriptor activities listed for each item

with a similar descriptor activity that was culturally appropriate when necessary. For example, in the question "Do you participate in games with the members of your family?" one original descriptor was board games which was replaced in Spanish with table games. The researchers were also fluent in Spanish and one was Hispanic which allowed for culturally aware clarification if needed during the data collection process.

Analysis

Data were entered and checked to verify proper entry. A stepwise discriminant analysis was then performed to identify the sociodemographic and independent variables that were correlated with acculturation group membership (low, high, and bi, acculturation) as defined by the BAS. Discriminant analysis identified a linear combination for the independent and sociodemographic variables in each acculturation group. These linear combinations for each subject or family can be thought of as scores. Parent, youth, or family data sets have a score associated with each level of acculturation for each person. (i.e., a score associated with low acculturation, a score associated with high acculturation, and a score associated with being bicultural). The discriminant analysis finds these linear combinations in such a way that the respondent's score is high for the group in which they belong and low for the other two. Thus, any variable that is a significant discriminator of group membership is highly correlated with low, high, or bi acculturation. In the current study, categories were created for the levels of acculturation indicating low acculturation, high acculturation, and bicultural using the method created by Marin and Gamba (1996). Youth levels of acculturation were limited to comparisons of bicultural and high acculturated youth due to the fact that only two youth were in the low acculturation group.

Results

After creating categories for levels of acculturation for parent, youth, and family, a stepwise discriminate analysis was conducted in order to see if the independent variables could discriminate levels of acculturation (for each dependent variable parent, youth, and family acculturation) after adjusting for sociodemographic variables. Variables were brought into the model if they were significant at a p-value of .15. The demographic and independent variables that were found to be significant discriminators of acculturation for parent, youth, and family are found in Table 1. The variables brought into the parent model from first to last were parent generation, parent education, being currently divorced, family size, age of parent, parent perspective of family cohesion, and parent perspective of overall family functioning. The order indicates that the first variable (generation) contributes the most to explaining parent acculturation while the last (overall family functioning) contributes the least in explaining parent acculturation.

TABLE 1
Summary of Discriminant Analysis Functions for Acculturation of Parent, Youth, and Family

Discriminant Variables	Low Acculturation*	Bicultural	High Acculturation
<i>Parent</i>			
Intercept	-97.15332	-112.70436	-108.83795
Generation (p)	1.06968	2.04706	2.46498
Education (p)	1.09486	2.20876	2.29767
Divorced (p)	-2.02832	-2.49427	1.37717
Family Size	2.64624	2.00729	2.20627
Age (p)	1.21414	1.30520	1.17703
Cohesion (p)	3.25040	3.58824	3.57829
Family functioning (p)	-13.35428	-15.41022	-15.75017
<i>Youth</i>			
Intercept		-32.30212	-27.73575
Generation (p)		-0.40141	0.41351
Gender (y)		4.21716	2.44942
Adaptability (y)		1.22606	1.11259
Ever divorced (p)		-0.65127	0.94589
Core family leisure (y)		0.12919	0.09822
Balance family leisure (y)		-0.03261	-0.01585
<i>Family</i>			
Intercept	-36.75369	-36.71144	-36.31706
Generation (p)	1.57607	1.73079	2.88199
Divorced (p)	-4.09633	-6.36103	-4.23003
Cohesion (p)	0.53423	0.74685	0.72212
Adaptability (p)	0.72817	0.47815	0.44087

Note. *p* = parent perspective; *y* = youth perspective; *Youth levels of acculturation were decided between bicultural and high acculturation due to the fact that the two individuals that made up the low acculturation level seemed too small a group to be compared.

The variables brought into the youth model from first to last were parent generation, gender of youth, youth perspective of family adaptability, parent history of divorce, youth perspective of core family leisure involvement, and youth perspective of balance family leisure involvement. For the family level perception of acculturation the variables brought into the model were parent generation, currently divorced, parent perspective of family cohesion, and parent perspective of family adaptability. Being a preliminary study on a convenience sample of subjects, *p*-values should be viewed with caution. Additionally, it is important to note that female respondents greatly outnumbered

male respondents for the parent sample. The effect could be a female bias in response to survey questions, resulting in gender related skewness of parent and family data.

The discriminant analysis indicated that the previously mentioned specific sets of sociodemographic and independent variables were highly correlated with acculturation of parents, acculturation of youth, and acculturation of Mexican-American families. The set of demographic and independent variables that best discriminated level of acculturation for parents in this sample matched the categories of acculturation created by Marín and Gamba's method (1996) 64.4% of the time. Youth level of acculturation (low, high, or bi) matched 68.5%, and family level matched 64.5% of the time.

Discussion

The most important findings of the study were the role leisure played in youth acculturation, the empirically derived characteristics of biculturalism from parents, youth, and family perspectives, and the discriminators of family acculturation. These findings have significant implications for practitioners in recreation and leisure services as well as for further research.

Leisure and Youth Acculturation

Allison (1988) called for research examining the role of leisure on the acculturation process. Stodolska and Yi (2003) also stated that "it would be useful to . . . study the interplay of leisure and ethnicity at various stages in the assimilation process" (p. 77). Results of this study offer some response to their calls and found family leisure to be a significant discriminator of acculturation from the perspective of Mexican-American youth. In other words, family leisure involvement played an important role in the acculturation process for Mexican-American youth. Findings indicated that bicultural youth participated in more core family leisure than high acculturated youth. This includes family activities that are common, inexpensive, spontaneous, and typically happen in or around the home environment. Such leisure patterns have been related to feelings of closeness and family cohesion (Freeman & Zabriskie, 2003) and suggest that bicultural youth have developed or maintained strong familial commitments. Furthermore, it appears that bicultural youth consider core family leisure involvement to be quite important either for themselves or for other family members.

High acculturated youth, on the other hand, participated in more balance family leisure than bicultural youth as hypothesized. This includes family activities that are typically out of the ordinary, are often outdoors and are new, challenging, or different. These findings are consistent with previous research (Floyd & Gramann 1993; Floyd, Gramann, & Saenz, 1993) that found low acculturated and bicultural Mexican-Americans participated in fewer outdoor recreation activities such as water or snow based, urban, and travel based leisure than Anglo-Americans. Balance family leisure activities

happen primarily outside of the home and require more interaction with mainstream American society. Such involvement is likely to play a significant role in the acculturation process of these highly acculturated youth who identify more with the dominant society versus becoming integrated into both cultures. It is interesting to note, however, that in a previous study of adults Shaull and Gramann (1998) found that bicultural Hispanics placed more importance on family-related benefits of outdoor recreation than low and high acculturated Hispanics. Although participation in such activities was not a significant predictor of acculturation for adults in this study as hypothesized, it may still be considered important for family related benefits which would offer some explanation as to why high acculturated youth value participation in balance family leisure.

Biculturalism of Parent, Youth, and Family

Researchers (Berry, 1980; Miranda & Umhoefer, 1998; and La-Fromboise, Coleman, & Gerton, 1993) believe that being bicultural is the ideal stage in the acculturation process. Therefore, identification of characteristics related to biculturalism is imperative. Referring to the application of the BAS, Marin and Gamba (1996, p. 310) said, "The possibility of reliably and validly identifying biculturals or the movement toward biculturality is an important contribution of this scale." Results from the current study revealed a set of bicultural behavioral characteristics from three different perspectives (Mexican-American parents, youth, and family).

Bicultural Mexican-American parents were older, less likely to be divorced, had smaller families, and reported greater family cohesion than low and high acculturated Mexican-American parents. Among other contributions, these findings add insight into the relationship between acculturation and family cohesion that contradict findings from previous research. Vega et al. (1986) reported that there was not a significant relationship between level of acculturation and family cohesion while findings from this sample indicate that there was a relationship and that it was a significant discriminator between levels of acculturation. One considerable difference, however, was that Vega et al. did not utilize a low, high, and bi framework of acculturation which may have limited their findings.

Bicultural Mexican-American youth in this study were more likely to be female, perceive their families to be more adaptable, belong to families with no history of divorce, and participate in more core family leisure activities than high acculturated Mexican-American youth. Previous research has reported mixed results related to gender differences in acculturation among Hispanic youth (Cuellar et al. 1995; Olmedo, Martinez, & Martinez, 1978). Szapocznik, Scopetta, Kurtines, and Aranalde (1978) found that Hispanic high school boys acculturated more quickly than high school girls. Others (Cuéllar et al.; Olmedo, Martinez, & Martinez) have reported no significant differences between males and females. There is a body of literature among Asian populations, however, that has consistently found females to accultur-

ate more quickly than males (Jo, 1999; Tang & Dion, 1999). Current findings in the youth sample suggest that males were more likely to be highly acculturated, while females were more likely to be bicultural. It is possible that Mexican-American males are more likely to abandon cultural background in an effort to identify with and become part of the mainstream society, while females are more likely to have the ability to both remain attached to cultural traditions and embrace a new way of living. Therefore, according to current findings the same girls who cook traditional food and take care of their siblings at home may also speak English as well as or better than the boys, have more American friends, and show other evidence of acculturation.

Another characteristic of bicultural youth was that they had greater family adaptability than high acculturated youth. This adds support to previous research (Szapocznik & Kurtines, 1980) that found bicultural Cuban-American youth had higher ratings of adjustment or adaptability than low or high acculturated youth while at school. It is likely that bicultural Mexican-American youth report higher family adaptability due to a variety of factors including school involvement, having friends from different cultural backgrounds, ongoing interactions with and responsibilities for family members, and the necessity of speaking two languages. Szapocznik and Kurtines concluded that being bicultural in a bicultural community, such as Dade County, Florida, is necessary for an individual's mental health. If that is the case, it is just as essential for the mental health of Mexican-American youth to be bicultural in order to function within their own nuclear and extended families as well as in their schools and communities.

When considering the family perspective bicultural families again had higher family cohesion and were less likely to be divorced than either low or high acculturated families. Although it would seem logical that high acculturated families would be more prone to increased divorce rates similar to those in the dominant culture, it is interesting to note that low acculturated families are also more likely to be divorced than bicultural families. This particularly stands out among this population because the family institution is considered to be so important and critical in Hispanic culture (Diaz-Loving & Draguns, 1999; Gil-Rivas, Greenberger, Chen, & Lopez-Lena, 2003; Gonzalez-Forteza, Salgado de Snyder, & Andrade Palos, 1993; Rubel, 1970). It is possible to argue that the lower incidence of divorce among bicultural families is related to other bicultural characteristics such as more involvement in core family leisure and higher family cohesion.

Discriminant functions for family acculturation. Although most of the discriminant functions between levels of acculturation were different from each perspective, generation and divorce were consistent among all three. High acculturated Mexican-American families were more likely to have lived in the United States for more generations than bicultural or low acculturated Mexican-American families. The trend to become more acculturated as families have lived in the United States for more generations is logical. Those who have lived in the United States for generations are more likely to have parents and children who have gone to school and worked in the United

States for many years and have become part of the Anglo culture. Friendships are likely to form between high acculturated families and Anglo-American families because interests and lifestyles are similar. Without specific efforts to develop bicultural characteristics it is likely that time will promote complete acculturation. High acculturated Mexican-American families are likely to be less comfortable with people who speak Spanish because they do not speak Spanish or speak little Spanish, resulting in less exposure to the Hispanic culture.

As noted above bicultural Mexican-Americans were less likely to be divorced or have a history of divorce than low or high acculturated Mexican-American families. Some researchers predict that in the United States around 65% of marriages will end in divorce (Baskerville, 2004) and the US census reports a divorce rate of 50% (U.S. Census, 2002), while the current findings indicated that only 25% of Mexican-American parents in this sample were or ever had been divorced. Vega (1990) stated, "The available evidence favors an interpretation that Hispanic families are increasingly vulnerable to marital disruption" (p. 1016). Although previous research suggests that the trend for Mexican-American parents is to become more similar to the dominant US population in relation to divorce, results of this study indicate that may not be the case. Findings suggest that Mexican-American families that are able to develop and maintain bicultural characteristics are less likely to be divorced than most other families.

Conclusions

One of the most significant contributions of this study was the necessity of utilizing different perspectives when examining family acculturation. Though there were some similarities (generation, divorce), there were clear differences in factors that discriminated between levels of acculturation among parent, youth, and family perspectives (see Table 2). Therefore, examinations describing acculturation of adults can not be used alone to understand broader systemic constructs such as family acculturation. Data from the parent, youth, and family perspectives resulted in a greater understanding of the overall family acculturation process.

Another contribution of this study was to empirically identify characteristics of biculturalism from Mexican-American parent, youth, and family perspectives. Bicultural Mexican-American parents were less often divorced, were older, and had higher family cohesion than low or high acculturated Mexican-American parents. Bicultural youth were more likely to be female, had higher family adaptability, were less likely to come from a divorced family, and participated in more core family leisure activities than high acculturated Mexican-American youth. Finally, from a family perspective, bicultural Mexican-Americans also had fewer divorces and higher family cohesion than low or high acculturated Mexican-American families.

As noted previously, the subjects for this study were recruited through convenience sampling methods. Therefore, generalizations of findings

TABLE 2

Summary of Discriminant Functions for Parent, Youth, and Family Acculturation

Independent Variables Acting as Discriminant Functions	Parent Acculturation	Youth Acculturation	Family Acculturation
Parent Generation	x	x	x
Parent Education	x		
Being Currently Divorced	x		x
Family Size	x		
Parent Age	x		
Parent Persp. of Family Cohesion	x		x
Parent Persp. of Family Functioning	x		
Youth Gender		x	
Youth Persp. of Family Adaptability		x	
Parent's History of Divorce		x	
Core Family Leisure Inv. (Youth)		x	
Balance Family Leisure Inv. (Youth)		x	
Parent Persp. of Family Adaptability			x

Note. Persp. = perspective; Inv. = involvement.

should be made with some degree of caution. Furthermore, it should also be noted that given the number of variables examined, the sample size was relatively small. It is likely that with a larger sample size the identified relationships would be stronger.

Recommendations for Recreation Professionals

Family leisure involvement is important to Mexican-American youth and plays a significant role in their acculturation process. Therefore, recreation and leisure professionals should consider specific characteristics when developing and facilitating programs that include Mexican-American adolescents. Efforts to involve bicultural youth and promote biculturalism among Mexican-American youth in leisure programs must take into account the importance these youth place on core family leisure involvement. Programs that teach basic recreation skills and promote regular ongoing involvement in common activities with family members are essential. Past research (Zabriskie, 2000) has also called for communities to implement programs for families that are common, spontaneous, and ordinary in order to achieve full rewards of family leisure involvement. Therefore, programs intended for bicultural Mexican-American youth and their families might include activities such as weekly picnics and barbeques, attending weekly sporting events as a family, family game nights, and monthly family dances. High acculturated Mexican-American youth placed importance on balance family leisure activities. These youth enjoyed family activities that were out-of-the-ordinary, challenging, and primarily done out of the home. Although most leisure services

already provide this type of programming, when targeting Mexican-American youth, efforts should be made to include the entire family in activities.

It is also recommended that advertising for recreation programs and special events targeting Mexican-American populations be in English. The families and individuals who would show the most interest in these programs may only be proficient in English, or are bicultural and would also be proficient in English. Translating advertisements into Spanish is likely to expend a lot of money with few positive results. A final recommendation is the importance of promoting inclusive events that encourage family involvement from all members of the constituent communities. Culturally sensitive celebrations like Cinco de Maio with family focused activities for the entire community are likely to meet critical needs as well as to promote biculturalism among participants.

Implications for Research

Researchers (Freeman & Zabriskie, 2003; Mactavish & Schleien, 1998; Zabriskie, 2000; Zabriskie & McCormick, 2003) suggest that studying more than the adult perspective is essential when examining aspects of family life. A weakness in acculturation studies has been the focus on the individual to understand all aspects of acculturation. In addition to adult perspectives of acculturation, youth and family level perspectives offer valuable insight and provide a more comprehensive view of the acculturation process. Therefore, future studies examining acculturation from multiple perspectives such as those of parents, youth, and families are strongly encouraged. Larger samples are also needed to allow all levels of acculturation to be found from each of the different perspectives. For instance, the current study would have benefited from collecting data of low acculturated youth to gain a greater understanding on overall youth acculturation.

In addition to the current study, previous studies on acculturation have used nonrandom samples; therefore, to get a more accurate view of acculturation for general Mexican-American populations in the United States and to increase the ability to generalize findings a random sampling is needed. A normative sampling of Mexican-Americans on such items as family functioning, family leisure involvement, and other variables of interest would allow for comparisons between the national averages and samples in individual communities.

A greater understanding of acculturation for Mexican-Americans would also be possible by examining a normative sample of families in Mexico for characteristics such as family functioning and family leisure involvement. This would allow researchers to know if the Mexican immigrants who arrive in the United States are similar in family cohesion, adaptability, and leisure patterns to the dominant society from which they came. The families who leave Mexico may have certain characteristics that differ from a Mexican normative sample. This would also allow for broad comparisons between Mexican, United States, and Mexican-American populations. A final reason

for a normative sampling is to provide a base line from which to conduct ongoing longitudinal research throughout the acculturation process.

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