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## The Relationship of Ethnic Identity and School Achievement Among Mexican American Adolescents

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The Relationship of Ethnic Identity and School  
Achievement among Mexican American Adolescents

by

Yolanda Bautista de Domanico

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate  
School of Loyola University of Chicago in Partial  
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

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## VITA

The author, Yolanda Bautista de Domanico, is the daughter of Salvador Bautista Sr. and Maria Teresa (Gonzalez) Bautista. She was born June 25, 1963, in Chicago, Illinois.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Mental health professionals have shown concern within the past few decades about the excessive high school drop-out rate among Hispanics (Padilla & Ruiz, 1973). In 1987 only 51% of Hispanics 25-years old and over completed four years or more of high school, compared to 78% of non-Hispanics. In addition, nearly three-quarters of Hispanic students have been placed in non-academic curriculum tracks. This ultimately inhibits acceptance to institutions of higher learning (Keefe and Padilla, 1987). The relatively low level of educational attainment among Mexican Americans stands out as perhaps the most important social problem facing members of this ethnic group.

Ten million Mexican Americans form one of the largest ethnic minority groups in the United States. They constitute 4.4% of the population, and their impact on this country, especially in the Southwest, is well recognized (Keefe & Padilla, 1987). However, it has repeatedly been observed that Mexican Americans tend to drop out of school earlier than their Anglo American peers, and that the academic performance of those Mexican Americans remaining



in school falls considerably below that of the national norm (Ramirez, 1974).

As Keefe and Padilla (1987) explain, some theorists believe that the eradication of poverty is necessary to reduce the high attrition rate among Mexican American students. Poverty, they contend, leads to the feeling of futility. This futility, in turn, translates into a negative attitude toward school. Other theorists believe that the school must be held responsible for the educational problems of Hispanic children (Keefe & Padilla, 1987). Discrimination by teachers and tracking systems that place Hispanics in classes for slow learners are presented as causes of the higher attrition rates among Hispanic students (Carter, 1968). Heller (1966) maintains that Hispanic ethnic traits are adverse to success in Anglo-oriented schools. Heller has posited a number of personal factors, such as poorer self-concept and a lack of motivation, as the cause of poor school performance for Mexican Americans in Anglo schools. Although a great deal of research has been generated to examine the reasons for the lack of achievement in this ethnic group, few have attempted to understand this problem in light of the ethnic identity the Mexican American student adopts. This present project will attempt to assess the notion that possession of a bicultural ethnic identity may be beneficial to the academic achievement and level of self-esteem in Mexican American adolescents.

Ramirez' review (1974) of the educational research on Hispanics proposed that Mexican Americans fail in school because of racism, incompetence, bilingualism, and a lack of regard by schools for Hispanics' needs. In fact, Albert and Obler (1966, cited in Ramirez, 1974) postulated that the bilingual individual is less likely to achieve perfect fluency in any one language. Consequently, bilingualism might engender substandard academic performance as an individual is forced to cognitively deal with a complex society that primarily values the English language.

Ramirez postulates that a misconception exist among members within the school system that Hispanics are simply uninterested in academic achievement. He also concludes that values inherent in the Mexican culture which are somewhat antithetical to the "American way of life." Such values held by Mexican Americans include fatalism, a present-time orientation, and a negative attitude toward education. It stands to reason that those Mexican Americans who strongly identify with the Mexican culture may experience more stress living in a predominantly Anglo-influenced society. Furthermore, they may manifest more psychological problems than other Mexican Americans who identify more with the Anglo American culture. This hypothesis has been called the "melting pot" theory (Szapocznik, Kurtines, & Fernandez, 1980) or "damaging culture" theory (Buriel, Calzada, & Vasquez, 1982).

However, the "bicultural" hypothesis asserts that the Mexican American who is acculturated, but maintains a footing in the traditional culture, is more adaptive than the completely acculturated Mexican American. It appears that the melting pot and bicultural hypotheses give opposite predictions regarding the relationship between acculturation and psychological adjustment. Each predicts a healthier psychological adjustment; however each prediction is based on totally different levels of acculturation. In order to better understand this, Ramirez (1974) chose to focus on the educational environment which might promote the "melting pot" theory over the "bicultural" theory for Hispanic students.

One of the behaviors in Mexican American and Anglo children which has been studied, in relation to the melting pot hypothesis, has been the "incentive motivational style" as it is manifested in competition. The term "incentive-motivational style" may be defined as a preference for a set of goals and rewards (Ramirez, 1974). These incentives are represented by changes in the environment which indicate or are associated with support and acceptance of behavior.

Kagan and Madsen (1971, cited in Ramirez, 1974) studied the behavior of Mexican, Mexican American, and Anglo American children. When the children were asked to cooperate with each other to achieve rewards, both sets of Mexican children were more cooperative among each other than

were Anglo American children. When the experimenter gave the children a competitive chore on the same task, Anglo American children were more competitive than either set of Mexican children. This could signify that Mexican American children were more highly motivated in the cooperative setting than in the competitive. Teachers and non-Mexican American students who are not familiar with this orientation might inaccurately interpret the Mexican American student's uneasiness in competitive situations as fear of failure or lack of motivation.

Another study (Ramirez & Price-Williams, 1974) illustrates more differences between the incentive-motivational styles of Mexican Americans and Anglo Americans. Stories told by Mexican American and Anglo American children derived from the School Situation Picture Stories Technique (SSPST) were analyzed for achievement needs. Anglo American children scored higher on the need for self-achievement, whereas, Mexican American children scored higher on the need for achievement as it relates to the family. Stories told by Mexican American children indicate that they want to achieve in order to arouse parental pride and to benefit the family in general. In contrast, stories told by Anglo American children reflected achievement needs for self, in which the achiever is the primary beneficiary.

Research indicates that Mexican American and Anglo

American children perform differently on cognitive tasks as well as on tasks reflecting incentive-motivational and human relational styles. It is hypothesized that differences in cultural values are reflected in socialization practices; such as the nature of reward, teaching styles, and student/teacher relationships which in turn result in differences between the cognitive styles of Mexican American and Anglo American children (Ramirez, 1974). Ramirez further argues that through socialization practices, children develop preferences for certain types of rewards and are more motivated by culturally appropriate incentives. Through social practices, values affect many school and learning behaviors which, when recognized, may be utilized to teach children more effectively.

Ramirez has developed a program for schools that recognizes the values and unique needs of Hispanics in the educational environment. In his "Culturally Democratic Educational Program," Ramirez believes that Hispanics should be placed in an educational environment that values the Hispanic culture, includes Hispanic heritage in the curriculum, and acquaints teachers with Hispanic cultural values. Ramirez implemented this program in Texas during the early 1970's and ascertained that Mexican American children who participated in the program achieved significantly higher scores on standardized achievement tests than Mexican American children in regular classrooms

(Ramirez, Cox, & Herd, 1973, cited in Ramirez, 1974).

Ramirez further posits that improved academic achievement may result from enhancing self-esteem through the inclusion of Hispanic culture in the curriculum. In addition to enhanced self-esteem and academic achievement, a culturally democratic educational environment strives to promote intercultural understanding between Hispanics and non-Hispanic children, teachers, and parents. It is hoped that a consequence of being in this environment is the development of a bicultural identity in Hispanic children. This development is considered to be one of the most important goals for a culturally democratic educational environment. By encouraging Hispanics to become more familiar with the Hispanic culture and learn Spanish, they are given a rich opportunity to appreciate and share more fully in the Hispanic culture.

#### Acculturation and Assimilation

Another explanation for the lack of achievement among Mexican Americans involves the varying degrees of acculturation they obtain. Often, acculturation and assimilation are discussed and measured concurrently because acculturation is assumed to be a prerequisite for assimilation. However, Keefe and Padilla (1987) feel it is a grave mistake not to draw a distinct difference between the two terms. Acculturation refers to the acceptance of

cultural patterns and traits while assimilation refers to the social, political, and economic integration of an immigrant or minority member into the mainstream society (Keefe & Padilla, 1987). In order for assimilation to occur, the individual must have acculturated to some extent and must be accepted by the dominant group. Acculturation, however, does not assure assimilation. Social assimilation involves the integration of ethnic minorities into primary relations (e.g., intermarriage) and secondary relations (e.g., school and political arena) with members of the dominant group.

The measurement of acculturation in individuals has been hindered by the complexity of acculturation and its cognitive, behavioral, and attitudinal components. Acculturation is really a multifaceted phenomenon composed of numerous dimensions and factors--not all of which have been clearly identified or specified. In recent years, there has been an increasing interest in the measurement of acculturation in Hispanic groups (Olmedo & Padilla, 1978; Szapocznik, Scopetta, Kurtines, & Arnalde, 1978). Research and instrument development in the area of acculturation has progressed from the use of a single index, such as language usage, to multiple socio-cultural characteristics such as nationality, language, and occupational status.

Another way in which acculturation is understood is through the belief that acculturation must take place

rapidly if the minority member is to escape acculturative stress. Examples of acculturative stress include: 1) a great disparity in behavior and attitude between the immigrant and host culture, and 2) a strong pressure for the immigrant to acculturate (Berry & Ellis, 1974, cited in Griffith, 1983). However, some research has shown that high acculturation can lead to adjustment problems.

Ramirez (1969) found in his sample of high school students, that the acculturation to Anglo norms was accompanied by more, rather than fewer, adjustment problems. Significantly fewer home and health adjustment problems (as measured by subscales on the Bell Adjustment Inventory) were observed in Mexican American high school students who strongly identified with Mexican values (called 'in-groupers') than in students who tenuously held Mexican values (called 'rebels'). Ramirez believes that the more acculturated Mexican American students ('rebels') show signs of more psychological stress than the less acculturated students ('in-groupers') because of the former's experience of conflict between traditional values and Anglo values. It is now suggested that acculturation is accompanied by more stress and adjustment problems rather than by less stress as the melting pot hypothesis predicts. However, it must be noted that Ramirez' findings do not take into account the bicultural Mexican Americans falling in the middle of the distribution of acculturation. These



individuals were discarded in their analyses and discussion. It can be argued, from Ramirez's work, that possessing a bicultural orientation may lead to psychological health for immigrants in the United States.

Complete acculturation does not develop instantaneously or sometimes even in a lifetime. Keefe and Padilla (1987) learned that acculturation did not take place as rapidly or as thoroughly as implied by most interpretations. In their sample, even fourth generation Mexican Americans retained aspects of Mexican culture such as their values and involvement in large and local extended families. Keefe and Padilla call on a multi-dimensional approach to understand acculturation. Perhaps it could then explain why certain Mexican traits, such as knowledge of Mexican history and the Spanish language, decline significantly from one generation to the next, and other traits, such as Catholicism, tend to be maintained.

### Ethnic Identification

As a result of the apparent inability of the acculturative model to deal with variation in the process of cultural change, researchers have increasingly turned to the study of ethnic identification (Keefe & Padilla, 1987). Here the particular assemblage of cultural traits becomes less important than the self-identification among groups members: their attitude toward and affiliation with one

ethnic group and culture as opposed to others.

Sociologists, anthropologists, historians, and psychologists have all been intrigued by the challenge in defining and explaining the dynamics of ethnic identity development among various groups. Keefe and Padilla note that previous research has assumed a single continuum of change in which the adaptation of Anglo cultural traits and ethnic identification with Anglo Americans is a single process (Graves, 1967; Rubel, 1966). Keefe and Padilla (1987) believe that acculturation and ethnic identification are separate processes. Considering the distinction between the two processes, it is entirely possible for acculturation to proceed while ethnic identification is maintained.

Keefe and Padilla (1987) have sought to define and measure ethnic identity to determine the extent to which Mexican American's behaviors and values may be due to those cultural stresses and loyalties produced by the individual "marginal man" status. Marginality, as defined by Stonequist (1937), refers to the person whose bicultural membership retards the integration of ethnic and personal identity. A person may see the relative benefits of acculturating to the values of the dominant group while feeling pressure from family members and friends to remain ethnically loyal. Co-existence in two cultures has long been recognized to be associated with psychological stress (Wallace, 1970). It is posited that, as acculturation

increases among Hispanics, they will experience increasing personal stress associated with the apparent cultural differences (Ruiz, Padilla, & Alvarez, 1978).

Mirowsky and Ross (1980) surveyed 938 minority subjects (84 Blacks, 627 Whites, 90 Mexicans, and 140 Mexican Americans) to examine their psychological well-being (e.g., absence of stress, anxiety). They found that Mexican Americans had the highest stress level among the four groups. They believe this was a result of the Mexican American being caught between the relentless demands of the Mexican and American cultures as both impinged on his/her loyalty. "His (Mexican American) conflicting values give him a distressing sense of insecurity, instability, and disorientation" (p.483).

Mexican Americans have tried to deal with their minority group status in different ways. Some have tried to reject their Mexican heritage and may have overacculturated in the process. To learn about the host culture is clearly adaptive. However, to simultaneously discard those skills which effectively allow them to interact with the culture of origin, such as language and relational style, is not adaptive. Szapocznik, Kurtines, and Fernandez (1980) believe that second generation adolescents, especially those at junior and senior high school age, are trying to deny their ethnicity and become more 'Americanized.' In the process, they run the risk of

rejecting their parents and their culture of origin which can give rise to serious familial and interpersonal identity conflicts (Szapocznik, Kurtines, & Fernandez, 1980).

Gekas (1973) interviewed 400 Mexican American youths and found that those Mexican American students who were alienated from their cultural peers were more successful in school. Also, those students who were overly identified with their Mexican heritage tended to drop out. Finally, Gekas noted that the students who chose to go to college were often ostracized by their peers and family.

At the other end of the spectrum, some Mexican Americans under-aculturated resulting in a retention of their 'Hispanicity' and a failure to learn adaptive Americanized behaviors. Ideally, it is these Americanized behaviors that would allow them to interact and negotiate with the American culture. Szapocznik, Kurtines, and Fernandez (1980) noted that "these Mexican American youth tend to get along well with their parents, but they also become withdrawn, isolated, and apathetic, so that they present a depressed, neurotic pattern of behaviors" (p. 363). A significant number of these under-aculturated youths are not identified by the school system since they tend to be non-disruptive. This might suggest that these withdrawn and depressed students underachieve; but not to the extent that school administrators become overly concerned.

What may be occurring is that many Mexican Americans who have become over-aculturated are totally rejecting their Hispanic heritage. On the other end of the spectrum there are those individuals who remain unacculturated and are unable to adjust or assimilate into the American culture. However, neither extreme marginal position suggest that there is a satisfactory adjustment to social or school situations since they fail to integrate the richness of both cultures. The problem of marginality is undoubtedly acute among some Mexican Americans who are socialized to varying degrees in one culture at home and another at school. Therefore, these questions emerge: with which cultural group do they identify? Also, how severe is the alienation that they feel from each culture?

In contrast to the personal distress that appears to be associated with marginality, several studies indicate that the maintenance of Hispanic values and traditions is associated with strong coping abilities (Keefe & Padilla, 1987). These coping abilities are used to enable effective adjustment and acceptance from both worlds as well as skills to live among and interact with both Hispanic and American cultural groups.

Szapocznik, Kurtines and Fernandez (1978) address the greater adaptability of the bicultural orientation, and have done several studies examining the relationship between acculturation and adjustment in Cuban Americans. Szapocznik

asked teachers to rate Cuban American students on their level of adjustment in school. Bicultural Cuban students were rated as significantly more adjusted than less bicultural students.

Szapocznik, Kurtines, & Fernandez (1980) found that the psychopathology scores of highly acculturated Cuban American adolescents tended to be significantly higher than those of bicultural Cuban Americans. The authors concluded that these results are consistent with the bicultural position. The findings indicate that adolescents who adopted Anglo American behaviors and attitudes while discarding traditional Cuban values experienced a higher frequency of adjustment problems as compared to individuals who maintained a bicultural orientation.

Buriel, Calzada, and Vasquez (1982) examined the relationship between educational aspirations, delinquency, and acculturation in Mexican American male adolescents. There was more disparity between educational aspirations and expected fulfillment between second generation (i.e., individuals born in the United States with one or both parents born outside the U.S.) and third generation (i.e., individuals born in the United States with one or both grandparents born outside the U.S.) Mexican Americans. Also, significantly higher rates of self-reported delinquency were observed in third generation rather than second generation Mexican Americans. Results indicate that

bicultural Mexican Americans (second generation) tend to be better adjusted (in terms of self stereo-typing, disparity between educational goals, expected achievement, and self-reported delinquency) than highly acculturated Mexican Americans (third generation). The authors explained that acculturated Mexican Americans who maintain a footing in their traditional culture are better able to 'inoculate' themselves against the generally negative image of Mexican Americans held by Anglo Americans, and possibly, against the development of unrealistic expectations.

Another study that has attempted to address biculturalism and any adaptiveness associated with it was done by Szapocznik et al. (1986). Their study tested the effects of using a bicultural approach to solving family problems. They tested the relative effectiveness of two treatment modalities in reducing psychosocial dysfunction in adolescents and their families experiencing intergenerational/acculturational conflict. This conflict may occur because youngsters tend to acculturate more rapidly than their parents. The substantial intergenerational differences in acculturation that develop in the family may either precipitate or exacerbate existing family problems and particularly those of an intergenerational nature. The two modalities were Structural Family Therapy (SFT) and Bicultural Effectiveness Training (BET). In their study, the authors reported that

they did not use a placebo group because of the ethical issues raised by withholding treatment, particularly to a population of adolescents with behavioral/conduct disorders. In order to establish the effectiveness therapies, SFT was utilized as a positive control condition.

The BET modality is innovative in the sense that it is a culturally oriented, psycho-educational intervention that aims to change dysfunctional family structure by developing a transcultural perspective and teaching bicultural skills to the family. Fifty families were randomly sampled from a large Hispanic mental health center and were required to contract for 12 treatment sessions. The effectiveness of the two modalities was determined by the degree to which improvement was achieved as assessed by treatment outcome instruments. The researchers found that both groups had significant post treatment changes. The results of this study indicated that the BET modality is as effective as SFT in reducing family disruptions, and adolescent behavioral disorders. The BET group was able to resolve their problems as they realized that their conflicts arose in part from their differences in their bicultural status. However, the limitations imposed by the use of a positive control condition (i.e. lack of control for no treatment or attention/expectancy effects) need to be further evaluated.

The complicated process of biculturality continues to



challenge researchers in this area. Biculturalism has been conceptualized in several ways, with each one involving a different notion of biculturalism or facility between the two cultures. Three popular models have been identified.

The single continuum model of acculturation assumes the gradual replacement of traditional Mexican culture traits with Anglo American traits. As a result, a bicultural person is one who has changed to some extent in all aspects of life. Graves (1967) and Matthiason (1968) used this model in their work with Mexican Americans. This model illustrates a simple continuum of cultural change, progressing from unacculturated to acculturated with biculturalism being somewhere in the middle.

The second model is called the two culture matrix model. Four types of identity are possible in this matrix: (a) unacculturated (b) marginal (c) bicultural (d) acculturated. Here the two cultural systems are treated independently as separate axes forming a matrix. Each culture is conceived of as existing on a single continuum, and individuals may vary in their acceptance of and adherence to the two cultures. Thus, individuals who add traits from the new culture to their native traits are bicultural, while individuals who do not fully accept either culture are marginal. The matrix model was first presented by McFee (1968, cited in Keefe & Padilla, 1987) and has been applied to Mexican Americans by Ruiz, Casas, and Padilla

(1977).

The third model is called the multi-dimensional model. This model recognizes that the acceptance of new cultural traits and the loss of traditional cultural traits varies from one attribute to another. Individuals may quickly discard some native behaviors and adopt certain traits from the new culture (i.e., learning English to improve economic status), but other native attributes (i.e., family organization and child-rearing practices) may be maintained and strengthened. It is important that each aspect of cultural change be measured independently in order to have an accurate assessment of biculturality. A bicultural person can retain some traditional traits and adopt some new traits, but unlike the second model, there is not an assumption that a bicultural person is highly adept in both cultures.

#### Self-Esteem In Mexican American Adolescents

It is also stated that the maintenance of a bicultural identity may positively affect self-esteem (Griffith, 1983). Several researchers have reported that Mexican Americans perceive themselves unfavorably. Carter (1968) felt that most educators who "deal with Mexican American children are convinced that the group contains a larger than normal percentage of individuals who view themselves negatively" (p. 217).

Schwartz (1969, cited in Evans & Anderson, 1978) found the gap between the self-esteem of Mexican Americans and Anglo Americans students to be greater at the senior high school level than at the junior high school level. This suggests that Anglo Americans students become more self-assured with increased exposure to the school environment. However, the author states that Mexican Americans seemed to show a loss of self-esteem as awareness of their minority group status increased. Evans and Anderson (1978) reported a "ubiquitous lack of confidence among the Mexican American students in this sample, as they doubted their ability to succeed in college or even complete high school" (p. 403).

In an earlier study, Anderson and Evans (1973) examined the different levels of self-concept as it relates to ability, achievement, motivation, values, and aspirations among 89 Mexican Americans and 37 Anglo American high school students. Students in this stratified random sample were evaluated via questionnaires and personal interviews. The study indicates that regardless of the amount of English used in the home, Mexican American students had lower self-concepts of ability, a higher striving orientation ( i.e., wanting to achieve or get more out of life but not wanting to work for it), and lower educational aspirations than their Anglo American peers. The study also found strong positive correlations between self-concept in two areas: educational motivation and educational aspirations

(.41 and .50 respectively). Anderson and Evans speculated that the Mexican American students (in this sample) are trapped in a vicious downhill spiral with every difficulty or failure reducing their self-confidence and thereby increasing their chances for more difficulties" (p. 403).

Ramirez (1974) has proposed that teaching classes which emphasize heritage and the Spanish language are essential for improving self-esteem. In a study by Alvarez and Ramirez (1970, cited in Ramirez, 1974), Mexican American children who received lessons in Mexican and Mexican American heritage scored significantly higher on the Coopersmith Self-esteem Inventory than did a comparable group of Mexican American children in a community where heritage lessons were not available. However, there are many studies which report that Hispanics do not perceive themselves less positively than Anglo Americans ( e.g., Anderson & Johnson, 1971; Rice, Ruiz & Padilla, 1974). It is possible that since many Hispanics are from economically deprived backgrounds, they may possess positive self-concepts as a result of their struggle for self-preservation. However, this phenomenon may only occur for a select group of economically compromised Hispanics.

### Rationale

Biculturalism is an important and very complex issue that needs further clarification. Biculturalism does seem

to affect an individual's self-esteem, educational aspirations, and level of achievement. Monoculturalism in Mexican Americans seems to be associated with maladjustment, while biculturalism appears to be associated with greater levels of adaptiveness. Sommer (1964) observed that individuals who were able to form "ideal" identities function better in their bicultural society. This might suggest that the more flexible an individual is, the more quickly and easily s/he can adjust to a changing environment. Therefore, the Mexican American youth who can integrate (i.e., adapt) his/her homelife and academic pursuits might tend to stay in school, work harder, and achieve at a higher level. Ultimately, Mexican Americans who constructively adapt to America's complex society lessen the possibility of developing psychological problems (Szapocznik, et al, 1986).

#### Hypotheses

The literature suggests that efforts to facilitate the development of bicultural identity might be utilized to help Mexican American students resolve their dual-cultural identity conflict and become more productive members of American society. This study attempted to determine if Mexican American students have different levels of self-esteem, psycho-social discomfort, and academic achievement based on their stated ethnic identity: **bicultural** (moderate

ethnic cultural awareness and ethnic loyalty), Mexican acculturation (high Mexican cultural awareness and ethnic loyalty) or Anglo acculturation (low Mexican cultural awareness and ethnic loyalty).

Hypothesis I: It was hypothesized that bicultural Mexican Americans students would demonstrate higher levels of self-esteem than either their Mexican or Anglo acculturated counterparts.

Hypothesis II: It was hypothesized that bicultural Mexican American students would demonstrate lower levels of psychosocial discomfort than either Mexican or Anglo acculturated students.

Hypothesis III: It was hypothesized that bicultural Mexican Americans would perform at a higher academic level than Mexican acculturated students.

## CHAPTER II

### METHOD

#### Subjects

A total of 62 subjects were recruited from four Catholic, co-ed, Chicago high schools to participate in this study. The subjects were required to be Mexican American sophomores in high school. The subjects were divided into three ethnic identity groups - Mexican acculturated, Bicultural, and Anglo acculturated. The groups consisted of 31 Mexican acculturated, 19 biculturals, and 12 Anglo acculturated subjects.

The Mexican acculturated group was composed of 13 males and 18 females with a mean age of 15.4 years. The Bicultural group contained five males and 14 females with a mean age of 15.4 years. Finally, the Anglo acculturated group consisted of seven males and five females with a mean age of 15.9 years.

No significant differences regarding socio-economic status were found among the three groups. According to Hollingshead's (1958) classifications, the subjects were primarily lower middle class. All subjects volunteered to take part in this project without compensation.

## Measures

**Cultural Awareness and Ethnic Loyalty ( CALS; Keefe & Padilla, 1987)** is a 136 item self-report measure that evaluates ethnic awareness across six dimensions: (a) language familiarity and usage; (b) cultural heritage; (c) ethnic interaction; (d) ethnic pride and identity; (e) ethnic distance and perceived discrimination; and (f) generational proximity to Mexico. From the composite of scores on the six dimensions, one can specify an individual's degree of ethnic identification with traditional values and behavioral norms. The test has adequate test-retest reliability at  $r=.85$  and construct validity at  $r=.37$ .

**Tennessee Self-Concept Scale (TSCS; Fitts, 1965)** consists of 100 first person statements to which a subject responds on a 5-point Likert-type scale, ranging from completely true to completely false. Of the 100 statements, 90 items evaluate five external references of self-concept: "physical self," "moral-ethical self," "personal self," "family self," and "social self." The measure is also supplemented by a 10 item Self-Criticism scale. Split-half reliability is reported at  $r=.91$  while test-retest reliability is has a coefficient at  $r=.88$ . The TSCS takes approximately 13 minutes to complete.

**Profile of Mood States (POMS; McNair, Lorr, & Droppleman, 1971)** is a 58 item self-report inventory which



has six Likert-type scales measuring anger, tension, depression, confusion, vigor, and fatigue. Reported internal consistency co-efficients for the six scales range from  $r=.84$  to  $r=.92$ . Subjects are instructed to rate each adjective on a 5-point scale (i.e., extremely, quite a bit, moderately, a little bit, or not at all) to describe their current mood state. The POMS takes approximately 5-10 minutes to complete.

**California Achievement Test (CAT; Harns & Wennerholm, CTB/ McGraw-Hill, 1985):** The CAT has long been regarded as a well-developed achievement test carefully developed and normed. This test is designed to measure achievement in the basic skills commonly found in state and district curricula. The developers of this test report that reasonable attempts were made to achieve a proportionate representation of special education students, African-Americans, Hispanic, and Catholic school systems. Because the tests combine the most useful characteristics of norm-referenced and criterion-referenced tests, they provide information about the relative ranking of students against a norm group as well as specific information about the instructional needs of students. The test has adequate test-retest reliability of  $r=.85$  and construct validity of  $r=.52$ . The subject areas measured by the CAT include vocabulary, comprehension, spelling, language mechanics, language expression, math computation, math concepts and applications, study skills,

science, and social studies.

**Educational Development Series** (EDS; Scholastic Testing Services, 1985) is a battery of tests that survey verbal and non-verbal ability, interest in school subjects, educational and career plans, and school achievement in major curriculum areas. The EDS appears to be broadly representative of current school curricula and objectives. There are 11 parts to the test: non-verbal skills, verbal skills, reference skills, career interest, school plans, school interest, reading, language arts, math, science, and social studies. The authors report a coefficient alpha of greater than .90. Predictive and concurrent validity studies for the 1984 version of the EDS were conducted using the California Achievement Test (CAT) and the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT). Median correlation across grade levels ranged from .76 to .88 on the CAT to .76 to .83 for the SAT.

**National Educational Development Tests** (NEDT, Science Research Associates, 1984) are used to measure broad aspects of a student's educational development. It consist of four tests - english usage, mathematics usage, natural science reading, and social studies reading - and one test of educational ability. The test has good alternate form reliabilities ranging from  $\underline{r}=.66$  to  $\underline{r}=.85$ . There is wide variation in concurrent validity ranging from  $\underline{r}=.25$  to  $\underline{r}=.81$ .

**The Demographic Questionnaire** (Hollingshead, 1958) is

designed to obtain information concerning the age, sex, educational level, occupation and marital status of the main provider in one's household. Hollingshead's demographic questionnaire is frequently utilized in psychological research (Bergman, 1971). The demographic questionnaire is presented in Appendix B.

**Other Available Information:** The following academic information was utilized in the study: students' grade point average (G.P.A.) and class rank.

### Procedure

Of the seven schools contacted to participate in this study, only four agreed to permit their Mexican American sophomores to participate. Prior to the start of the program, all participants were introduced to the investigator and told that they were being asked to participate in an educational program concerning academic achievement among adolescent Mexican Americans. Consent forms which were previously distributed by the teacher were then collected. The Consent forms, in English and Spanish, are presented in Appendix C and D, respectively. Subjects were told that they could discontinue participation at any time if they desired. Subjects were instructed to submit any and all questions concerning the program. These questions were addressed at the end of the project. Participants completed the questionnaires in their

classrooms through the cooperation of teachers who were willing to let their students participate.

## CHAPTER III

### RESULTS

This study used a blocked design with ethnic identity as the independent variable and self-esteem, mood and academic achievement as general categories of the dependent variables. Ethnic identity was divided into three categories: bicultural, Mexican acculturated or Anglo acculturated. For each of the first two hypotheses, a one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was conducted to determine the validity of the pre-stated hypotheses. For each one-way ANOVA conducted, level of ethnic identity was the grouping factor. The dependent variables assessed within these analyses were self-esteem (TSCS) and psycho-social discomfort (POMS).

#### Self-Esteem

Analyses of the composite self-esteem scores indicate that there was a trend toward bicultural subjects scoring higher on the TSCS than did either the Mexican or Anglo acculturated subjects,  $F(2,59) = 2.53, p < .10$ . Table 1 summarizes these results. In using t-tests to further assess group differences, bicultural subjects scored

significantly higher on the TSCS than did the combination of Mexican and Anglo acculturated participants,  $t(60) = -1.96$ ,  $p < .05$ . Table 2 summarizes the  $t$ -test findings for self-esteem.

TABLE 1

Analysis of Variance Summary Table for Self-Esteem  
among the Three Ethnic Identification Groups

<u>Source of Variance</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>MS</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>p</u>
<u>Between</u>	2	1902.04	2.53	.10
<u>Within</u>	59	752.76		
<u>Total</u>	61			

TABLE 2

The  $t$ -test Summary Table for Self-Esteem  
among Biculturals and Mono-cultural

<u>Group</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>t</u>	<u>p</u>
<u>Bicultural</u>	326.26	20.50	-1.96	.02
<u>Mono-cultural*</u>	311.44	29.98		

\* Note: The term mono-cultural as used here and in subsequent references is used to refer to the combination of scores gathered from the Mexican and Anglo acculturated groups.

Along with the composite self-esteem scores, the component scale scores of the TSCS were also analyzed using a one-way ANOVA statistic. The subscales of the TSCS are Identity, Self-Satisfaction, Behavior, Physical Self, Moral-Ethical Self, Personal Self, Family Self, and Social Self.

Two of the 8 self-esteem component scales, Behavior and Social, displayed significant findings. The results of these ANOVAS are presented in Tables 3 and 4, respectively.

TABLE 3

Analysis of Variance Summary Table for  
Behavior subscale on TSCS

<u>Source of Variance</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>MS</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>p</u>
<u>Between</u>	2	275.31	3.19	.05
<u>Within</u>	59	88.27		
<u>Total</u>	61			

Significant differences were found for the Behavior subscale  $F(2,59) = 3.12$ ,  $p < .05$ . This subscale examines perceived level of functioning and activity level. Subsequent analysis of group means indicate that the bicultural group scored significantly higher than the Mexican and Anglo acculturated combined scores,  $t(60) = -2.35$ ,  $p < .05$ . This finding seems to indicate that bicultural adolescents are better able to perceive their own value and self-worth. Table 4 summarizes the  $t$ -test findings for Behavior.

TABLE 4

The  $t$ -test Summary Table for Behavior  
Sub-scale on TSCS

<u>Group</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>t</u>	<u>p</u>
<u>Bicultural</u>	105.15	6.80	-2.35	.02
<u>Mono-cultural</u>	99.09	10.30		

The other subscale of the TSCS that displayed significant differences among the three groups was the Social subscale,  $F(2,59) 3.19, p < .05$ . The results of this ANOVA are presented in Table 5.

TABLE 5

Analysis of Variance Summary Table  
for Social Subscale on TSCS

<u>Source of Variance</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>MS</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>p</u>
<u>Between</u>	2	171.73	3.19	<.05
<u>Within</u>	59	3.83		
<u>Total</u>	61			

The Social subscale assesses a subject's sense of adequacy or worth in relating to other people. Post-hoc analyses indicate that bicultural subjects scored significantly higher than mono-cultural subjects (Mexican or Anglo acculturated),  $t(60) = -2.54, p = .01$ . The results of this analysis are presented in Table 6.

TABLE 6

The t-test Summary Table for Social subscale on TSCS

<u>Group</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>t</u>	<u>p</u>
<u>Bicultural</u>	65.84	5.81	-2.54	.01
<u>Mono-cultural</u>	60.74	7.82		



### Psycho-social Functioning

To examine the psycho-social functioning of the three ethnic identity groups, an ANOVA was conducted to detect any significant differences among the groups. Initial analysis of the composite score of the POMS across groups did not support the pre-stated hypothesis of a lower POMS score for bicultural subjects than for either Mexican or Anglo acculturated subjects. A lower POMS score indicates a lower degree of psycho-social discomfort. Hence, these results suggest that there were no significant differences between the groups on measure assessing psycho-social discomfort. Refer to Appendix D for a summary of these results.

However, upon probing this finding,  $t$ -test comparisons between the mean score value for the bicultural group as compared to the mean score value of the Mexican and Anglo acculturated groups combined, indicate that bicultural subjects show a trend toward scoring lower on the POMS than the mono-culturalists  $t(57) = 1.62, (p = .06)$ . Table 7 displays the  $t$ -test results for psycho-social discomfort. Hence, as hypothesized, the bicultural group does seem to display less psycho-social discomfort than the monocultural subjects.

TABLE 7

The t-test Summary Table for Psycho-Social Discomfort

<u>Group</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>t</u>	<u>p</u>
<u>Bicultural</u>	40.26	23.39	1.62	.06
<u>Mono-cultural</u>	53.97	33.09		

### Academic Achievement

To examine the academic achievement of the aforementioned groups (i.e., biculturals and Mexican acculturated), a t-test was conducted on the students' national achievement test scores. There were no significant differences found for academic achievement among the two groups; all t values were within the range of one to negative one. Refer to Appendix E for a summary of these results. None of the subscores (reading, language, or math) of the composite academic achievement profiles appeared to be significantly different for either the bicultural or Mexican acculturated groups. In addition, neither group of subjects displayed any significant difference between groups in academic achievement as measured by grade point average (G.P.A.) or rank in class. Therefore, the hypothesis that Bicultural Mexican Americans would perform at a higher academic level than Mexican acculturated students was not supported.

### Intercorrelations

In another set of analyses, Pearson Product Moment Correlation were used to elaborate upon and further delineate any differences or similarities present for the three dependent measures for all three groups. A correlation matrix involving five variables was compiled in order to detect any significant correlations existing among the three dependent variables and their various components. The three composite scores of interest were self-esteem, psycho-social discomfort, and national achievement ranking. Also included in this matrix were the scores from the subjects' cumulative grade point average and rank in class, which served as indicators of academic achievement.

The Bonferroni correction technique was implemented in correcting for the probability of rejecting the null hypothesis. The calculated probability following this strategy is 0.01 . This criterion for establishing significance was imposed upon each matrix correlation. Only six correlations were found to be significant under this criterion for rejecting the null hypothesis.

A significant negative correlation was detected between self-esteem and psycho-social discomfort scores for bicultural subjects,  $r = -.63$ ,  $p < .005$  . This correlation suggests that a higher level of self-esteem was accompanied by a lower level of psycho-social discomfort for bicultural subjects.

Similar correlations were also found for the two other

groups. There is a significant negative correlation between self-esteem and psycho-social discomfort scores for the Mexican acculturated group,  $r = -.52$ ,  $p = .005$ . Likewise, there is a similar negative correlation between these scores for the Anglo acculturated group,  $r = -.69$ ,  $p = .01$ . This suggests that a high level of self-esteem is accompanied by a low level of psycho-social discomfort for subjects in all three ethnic identity groups. Tables 8-10 present the correlation coefficients for the five variables among the bicultural, Anglo, and Mexican acculturated groups.

TABLE 8

## Correlation Matrix for Bicultural Participants

<u>Rank</u>	-				
<u>GPA</u>	.45	-			
<u>POMS</u>	-.03	.03	-		
<u>TSCS</u>	.18	.05	-.62*	-	
<u>COMP</u>	.56	.61*	.01	-.07	-
	<u>Rank</u>	<u>GPA</u>	<u>POMS</u>	<u>TCSC</u>	<u>COMP</u>

Note:  $n=19$ . \* significant at .01 level.  
Refer to Method section for description of the terms used here and in subsequent reference.

TABLE 9

## Correlation Matrix for Anglo Acculturated Participants

<u>Rank</u>	-				
<u>GPA</u>	.91	-			
<u>POMS</u>	-.55	-.54	-		
<u>TSCS</u>	.15	.14	-.69*	-	
<u>COMP</u>	.66	.80*	-.57	.40	-
	<u>Rank</u>	<u>GPA</u>	<u>POMS</u>	<u>TSCS</u>	<u>COMP</u>

Note:  $n=12$ . \* significant at .01 level.

TABLE 10

## Correlation Matrix for Mexican Acculturated Participants

<u>Rank</u>	-				
<u>GPA</u>	.93	-			
<u>POMS</u>	-.15	-.19	-		
<u>TSCS</u>	.24	.31	-.51*	-	
<u>COMP</u>	.36	.53*	-.39	.31	-
	<u>Rank</u>	<u>GPA</u>	<u>POMS</u>	<u>TSCS</u>	<u>COMP</u>

Note:  $n=31$ . \* significant at .01 level.

Another significant set of correlations occurred for the three ethnic identification groups. A significant positive correlation was detected between G.P.A. and national achievement test scores for biculturals,  $r = .61$ ,  $p < .008$ . There is a significant positive correlation between G.P.A. and national achievement test scores for the

Mexican acculturated group,  $r = .53$ ,  $p < .002$ . Likewise, there is a significant positive correlation between these two measures for the Anglo acculturated group. Hence, a significant positive correlation exists between G.P.A. and national achievement test scores for all three ethnic identification groups.

Socio-economic status did not correlate significantly with academic achievement. Refer to Appendix F for review of these findings.

#### Additional Analyses

A 1 x 3 repeated measures ANOVA was conducted on the three composite measures of self-esteem, psycho-social discomfort, and academic achievement to determine any significant patterns among the dependent measure for each ethnic identification group. Composite scores of the POMS, TSCS, and national achievement tests were all converted to t-scores in order to analyze these three measures using a repeated measures statistics. Analysis of these three variables show no significant differences among the three groups in pattern of responding on the three measures. The group by measure interaction was not significant,  $F(4,118) = 1.43$ , ( $p = \underline{ns}$ ).

An ANOVA was performed to determine if there were any significant differences in rank among the three ethnic identity groups since no overall rank discrepancy was noted. However, there were no significant differences reported

among the three ethnic groups concerning rank in class,  $F(2,59) = 1.48$ , . Refer to Appendix G for a summary of the results.

Additional analyses were conducted to evaluate whether gender was related to significant differences in academic achievement (i.e., reading, language, rank, G.P.A., and composite scores) among the three ethnic identity groups. Since no overall academic achievement variations were found, it was possible that there might have been gender variance that might have been masked by grouping both sexes together. A series of  $t$ -test analyses revealed that among the three ethnic identity groups, only the Mexican acculturated group had any significant differences. Of the six scores being utilized, two of them denoted variation on rank and reading. On the reading variable, males were noted to have higher reading scores than females,  $t(29) = 2.00$ ,  $p = .05$ . Table 11 displays the  $t$ -test results for the reading scores by the Mexican acculturated group. With regard to the class rank, females had ranked higher in their respective classes than their male counterparts,  $t(29) = -2.00$ , ( $p = .05$ ). Table 12 summarizes the  $t$ -test findings for rank in class. Since rank in class is effected by ones G.P.A., it is not surprising that a trend was noted with females tending to have a higher G.P.A. than males,  $t(29) = -1.87$ , ( $p = .07$ ). The results of this analysis are presented in Table 13.

TABLE 11

The t-test Summary Table for Reading Scores  
by the Mexican Acculturated Group

<u>Group</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>t</u>	<u>p</u>
<u>Males</u>	50.69	16.16	2.00	.05
<u>Females</u>	39.05	15.79		

TABLE 12

The t-test Summary Table for rank in class  
by the Mexican Acculturated Group

<u>Group</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>t</u>	<u>p</u>
<u>Males</u>	0.42	0.03	-2.00	.05
<u>Females</u>	0.62	0.26		

TABLE 13

The t-test Summary Table for G.P.A.  
by the Mexican Acculturated Group

<u>Group</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>t</u>	<u>p</u>
<u>Males</u>	1.82	0.90	-1.87	.07
<u>Females</u>	2.33	0.63		

Gender differences were not found among the bicultural or Anglo acculturated groups as related to rank, G.P.A., math, reading, language or composite scores. Since there were no significant variations among the three ethnic groups, another t-test was conducted to determine if gender differences were present across ethnic groups. Results indicate that females had a significantly higher G.P.A. than



males,  $t(60) = -2.39$ ,  $p = .02$  . Table 14 summarizes these results. There was also a trend toward females having a significantly higher rank in class than males,  $t(60) = -1.93$ ,  $p = .06$  . Table 15 displays the  $t$ -test results for academic achievement.

TABLE 14

The  $t$ -test Summary Table for mean G.P.A. Values between Males and Females Collapsed Across Groups

<u>Group</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>t</u>	<u>p</u>
<u>Males</u>	1.76	0.77	-2.39	.02
<u>Females</u>	2.21	0.68		

TABLE 15

The  $t$ -test Summary Table for Rank in Class between Males and Females Collapsed Across Groups

<u>Group</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>t</u>	<u>p</u>
<u>Males</u>	0.41	0.26	-1.93	.06
<u>Females</u>	0.54	0.28		

## CHAPTER IV

### DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to assess the relationship between level of ethnic identity and academic achievement among Mexican American high school students. More specifically, the intent of this project was to assess the potential value of possessing a bicultural ethnic identity in relation to academic achievement.

This study attempted to determine if bicultural Mexican American high school students would possess higher levels of self-esteem than the Mexican or Anglo-acculturated participants. It was found that bicultural subjects did score significantly higher on the TSCS and reported higher levels of self-esteem than Mexican and Anglo acculturated participants. Furthermore, when the total positive score of the TSCS was broken down into its eight components, two of the subscales (Behavior and Social) also displayed significant differences. The Behavior subscale examines perceived level of functioning and activity level (e.g., "I am a friendly person"). The Social subscale assesses a subject's sense of adequacy or worth in relating to others ( e.g., "I try to please others, but I don't overdo it").

For both the Behavior and Social subscales, bicultural subjects scored significantly higher than the Mexican and Anglo participants.

It was conjectured that bicultural participants would demonstrate lower levels of psycho-social discomfort than their Mexican or Anglo acculturated counterparts. A  $t$ -test comparison indicated that bicultural participants showed a trend toward scoring lower on the POMS than did the Anglo and Mexican groups combined. Hence, the bicultural group does seem to display less psycho-social discomfort than subjects from the Mexican and Anglo groups.

It was also hypothesized that bicultural participants would perform at a higher academic level than Mexican acculturated students: no differences were found. This finding suggests that there were no significant findings for academic achievement among the biculturals and Mexican acculturated groups. None of the subscores (reading, math, and language scores from national achievement tests) of the composite academic achievement score appeared to be significantly different for either group. Furthermore, there were no significant differences between the two groups when comparing GPA and rank in class.

### Self-Esteem

Fitts, et al. (1977) view self-concept as being related to one's overall performance. A person who has a

clear, positive and realistic self-concept will generally behave in confident, constructive, and effective ways. "Other things being equal, the more optimal the individual's self-concept, the more effective he/she will function" (p. 9).

Those participants who identified themselves as bicultural exhibited a higher level of self-esteem than those students who were mono-cultural. This effect of higher self-esteem among biculturals seems to support previous findings (Ramirez, 1974, Anderson & Evans, 1973) which propose that those individuals who can develop a bicultural identity and integrate the two cultures might not feel pulled in two different directions. It would appear that bicultural adolescents have learned adaptive Americanized behaviors (e.g., the English language, dating patterns, music preference). Simultaneously, many biculturals have retained their Hispanic values (e.g., the Spanish language, respect for the elderly, value of the extended family) which allow them to relate to both native and Anglo culture without having to adhere to one rigidly.

Possessing a bicultural attitude seems to relate to feeling better about oneself and having a higher level of self-esteem. These individuals appear to view themselves as having value and worth. Conversely, mono-cultural participants who have significantly lower self-esteem appear to find themselves having less self-confidence, and

experiencing greater levels of anxiety and unhappiness.

When the total self-esteem score was further delineated, there were two other significant findings. Although the initial hypotheses did not look at each individual subscale, it was noteworthy to analyze these results. Of the eight subscales of the TSCS, significant differences were found for the Behavior and Social subscale.

The Behavior subscale measures one's perceived level of functioning and activity level. Bicultural subjects scored significantly higher than either the Mexican or Anglo participants. This finding seems to indicate that bicultural adolescents are better able to perceive their own value and self-worth. That is, there is an overall sense of feeling good about themselves. These individuals take care of themselves and value their family. The bicultural participants also see themselves as relating well to other people. They also view themselves as problem solvers, working to change the problem instead of running away from it. The attributions they hold toward themselves appear to be more positive than their Anglo or Mexican acculturated peers.

The bicultural Mexican-American students reported feeling more socially adept and empowered than their Mexican or Anglo acculturated peers. This suggests that biculturals see themselves in a more positive light when they are interacting with other people. The bicultural individual

might see him/herself as a friendly, sociable person who gets along well with others in diverse, social settings. It also suggests that this sociability stems from a genuine interest in others and a respect for individuality. Again, the issues of personal efficacy and competence appear to be the fundamental factors involved in this subscale.

It is possible that the bicultural Mexican American finds him/herself equally comfortable with people of either Hispanic or Anglo background. It could be hypothesized that for the under or over acculturated Mexican American, language might be a barrier that contributes to a sense of inadequacy and less self-worth. The Anglo-acculturated subject is unable to communicate effectively with relatives because of a lack of proficiency in Spanish. Conversely, the Mexican acculturated subject is unable to communicate effectively with teachers and Anglo peers because of a lack of proficiency in English.

#### Psycho-social Functioning

Bicultural participants demonstrated a trend toward scoring lower on the POMS than the Mexican and Anglo groups combined. It may be that bicultural subjects experience less anxiety, depression, anger, and confusion than the Mexican and Anglo acculturated participants. These findings follow previous research that has found that highly Anglo or Cuban acculturated Cuban Americans have a higher frequency of adjustment problems than those Cuban Americans

who have a bicultural orientation (Szapocznik, Kurtines, & Fernandez, 1990). These results might imply that as bicultural Mexican Americans integrate both cultures, they develop a sense of personal self-worth and feel less isolated from both cultures. Conversely, those Mexican Americans who over or under acculturate might feel alienated, weary and confused about their identity as they feel their loyalty torn between both cultures.

#### Academic Achievement:

The hypothesis that bicultural participants would perform at a higher academic level than Mexican participants was not substantiated. There were no significant differences between groups regarding academic achievement as measured by national achievement test scores, Grade Point Average, or rank in class. The reasons for this finding could be multiple. Four different co-education Catholic high schools were involved in the study who used different national academic achievement tests. Differences between schools, communities, curriculum, and standardized tests may have individually or in combination confounded the assessment of the relationship between ethnic racial identity and academic achievement.

Post-hoc analyses were conducted to determine if gender played a significant role in academic achievement among bicultural or monocultural Mexican Americans. One significant finding was that the Mexican acculturated group

had males who scored significantly higher than females on reading. Meanwhile, in the same group, females had a higher rank in class than males. When all the subjects were analyzed for gender differences (irrespective of what group they belonged), females were reported to have a significantly higher G.P.A. than males. They also displayed a trend towards having a significantly higher rank in class than males. It may be that Mexican-American females are supported and encouraged to achieve in academic settings in a manner in which their male counterparts are not.

#### Areas for Future Research

The Mexican-American adolescents in this study were parochial high school students. Thus, it is questionable as to whether the population sampled is truly representative of Mexican-American high school students in the United States. Consequently, the findings of the present study must be cautiously interpreted. Future research should enlist a wider and more diverse sampling of Hispanic adolescents, such as might be found in American public schools.

Continued examination and assessment of the psychometric properties of the Cultural Awareness and Ethnic Loyalty Scale (CALS) is needed. A longitudinal study that could assess ethnic identity development throughout the life-span would make a substantial contribution to the literature. Research in this direction would enable us to



more fully examine the role ethnic identity may have on personality development among Mexican-American adolescents. Assessment of parental attitudes, biculturality, gender, and socio-economic status may provide future researchers with added insight into the crucial factors related to academic achievement in Mexican American adolescents.

## Summary

The purpose of this project was to assess the relationship of Mexican American ethnic identity and self-esteem, psychological discomfort, and academic achievement. Much of the current literature dealing with biculturalism among Hispanics suggests that it might be utilized to help Mexican Americans resolve their dual-cultural identity. It was hypothesized that bicultural Mexican American subjects would demonstrate higher levels of self-esteem, and lower levels of psychological discomfort than either Mexican or Anglo acculturated subjects. It was also hypothesized that bicultural Mexican Americans would perform at a higher academic level than Mexican acculturated students.

The results of this study indicate that bicultural subjects reported higher levels of self-esteem than did the Mexican or Anglo acculturated groups. Biculturals reported experiencing higher perceived levels of social functioning and personal value. In contrast, the Mono-cultural subjects indicated feeling more anxious and unhappy than their bicultural counterpart. It would seem that pride in ethnic identity could contribute greatly in helping students develop positive self-concepts (Foerster, 1978).

It was also found that bicultural participants

experienced less anxiety, depression, anger, and confusion than did Mexican and Anglo acculturated subjects. These results may imply that as biculturals integrate both cultures, they are also able to develop a sense of personal self-worth and feel less isolated from both cultures. Conversely, those Mexican Americans who over or under acculturate appeared to feel alienated, weary, and confused about their identity.

Finally, bicultural participants did not perform at a higher academic level than Mexican acculturated subjects. There were no significant differences between groups regarding academic achievement as measured by national achievement test scores, G.P.A., or rank in class.

The results of this study suggest that Mexican Americans who adopt or possess a bicultural identity posture are better able to navigate some of the stressors encountered by being a member of a minority group in American society. The role that biculturality plays in academic achievement remains unclear. Future research in this area should address the interactive nature of SES, academic achievement, gender, and ethnic identity within Mexican American adolescents and young adults.

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**APPENDIX A**



## Demographic Questionnaire

1. How old were you on your last birthday? \_\_\_\_
2. Are you male (1) or female (2)? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What is the occupation of the main provider in your family? \_\_\_\_
  - A. Executive, doctor, dentist, lawyer or owner of a large business
  - B. Manager/owners of medium business or other professional
  - C. Administrator, small business person or semi-professional
  - D. Clerical or salesworker or technical worker
  - E. Semi-skilled laborer
  - F. Unskilled laborer
  - G. Unemployed for 1 year or more
4. What is the highest education level the main provider in your household has completed? \_\_\_\_
  - A. Graduate education
  - B. College degree
  - C. One year or more of college without degree
  - D. High School diploma
  - E. Some high school
  - F. Grade school diploma
  - G. Less than eighth grade
5. Your race/ethnicity is: \_\_\_\_\_
  - A. White
  - B. Black
  - C. Hispanic
  - D. Asian
  - E. Other
6. How many people live in your household? \_\_\_\_
7. How many brothers and sisters do you have? \_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX B

CONSENT FORM

Dear Friend:

Thank you for volunteering to participate in our research project. This study will attempt to assess academic achievement among adolescent Hispanics.

Please know that all of the information that we collect is **confidential**. This means that it will be seen only by myself and other qualified researchers and will be used for research purposes only. Further, the information is **anonymous**. Your name will not appear on any of the data. Instead, we are coding all of the information by number, not name. Finally, should you decide at any point to discontinue your participation in our project, for whatever reason, please feel free to do so. Though we do not expect that this will happen, we want you to know that you are free to leave the study at any point without incurring any kind of penalty. For this research project, we ask that you consent to filling out three questionnaires that will take less than an hour and allow us to have access to your academic records (Grade Point Averages, national achievement tests, honors).

Please feel free to ask any questions. Once again, thank you for participating in our project.

Sincerely,

Yolanda Bautista de Domanico

I have read the above and understand it.

-----  
Signature Date

-----  
Parent/Guardian

**APPENDIX C**

## FORMA DE PERMISO

Querido Amigo:

Gracias por participar voluntariamente en este proyecto. Este estudio va con el fin de valorar el nivel academico entre los adolescentes Hispanos.

Es importante que sepan que toda la informacion que es colectada es confidencial. Esto quiere decir que solamente investigadores profesionales tienen acceso a la informacion y que sera usada solamente con el proposito de la investigacion. Ademas, la informacion sera anonima. Su nombre no aparecera en la informacion. A toda la informacion se le dara un numero y no un nombre. Finalmente, si decide en cualquier momento no participar en nuestro proyecto, por qualquiera que sea la razon, tenga la libertad de decirlo. Sin embargo, no esperamos que esto suceda, queremos que se sienta con toda la libertad de discontinuar el proyecto sin delito alguno.

Por este proyecto de investigacion, pedimos su concentimiento para llenar tres cuestionarios que se tardan como una hora en llenarlos y nos permite valorar su nivel academico ( calificaciones de secundaria y exámenes Nacionales).

Por favor si hay alguna duda, sientase con la libertad de preguntar. Una vez mas, muchas gracias por participar en este proyecto.

Sinceramente,

Yolanda Bautista de Domanico

He leído lo anterior y lo entiendo.

-----  
Firma de estudiante

-----  
Fecha

-----  
Padre o madre/ guardian

**APPENDIX D**

## ANOVA table for Psychosocial Discomfort

<u>Source of Variation</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>MS</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>p</u>
<u>Between</u>	2	2021.59	2.22	.12
<u>Within</u>	56	909.88		
<u>Total</u>	58	948.21		

**APPENDIX E**



Test results on Academic achievement among  
Biculturals and Mexicans

<u>Rank</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>t</u>	<u>p</u>
<u>Mexican</u>	0.5416	.29	.62	.27
<u>Biculturals</u>	0.4900	.28		
<u>GPA</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>t</u>	<u>p</u>
<u>Mexican</u>	2.12	.79	.10	.46
<u>Biculturals</u>	2.10	.73		
<u>Reading</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>t</u>	<u>p</u>
<u>Mexican</u>	43.94	16.73	.15	.44
<u>Biculturals</u>	43.11	19.73		
<u>Language</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>t</u>	<u>p</u>
<u>Mexican</u>	37.67	23.80	-0.56	.29
<u>Biculturals</u>	41.76	25.17		
<u>Math</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>t</u>	<u>p</u>
<u>Mexican</u>	39.13	21.63	-0.41	.34
<u>Biculturals</u>	41.65	17.67		
<u>Composite</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>t</u>	<u>p</u>
<u>Mexican</u>	37.84	19.70	-0.78	.22
<u>Biculturals</u>	42.59	21.20		

**APPENDIX F**

Correlations between SES and  
academic achievement

	<u>Reading</u>	<u>Lang</u>	<u>Math</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>GPA</u>	<u>Comp</u>
<u>SES</u> <u>correlation</u>	-.33	-.12	.01	.19	.14	-.11
<u>SES</u> <u>significance</u>	.80	.35	.90	.12	.27	.38

**APPENDIX G**

Analysis of Variance Table for rank  
among the Three Ethnic Identification Groups

<u>Source of Variation</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>MS</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>p</u>
<u>Between</u>	2	.116	1.48	.235
<u>Within</u>	59	.078		
<u>Total</u>	61	.079		

APPROVAL SHEET

The thesis submitted by Yolanda Bautista de Domanico has been read and approved by the following committee:

Isiaah Crawford, Ph.D., Director  
Assistant Professor, Psychology  
Loyola University of Chicago

Alan S. DeWolfe, Ph.D.,  
Professor, Psychology  
Loyola University of Chicago

The final copies have been examined by the director of the thesis and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated and that the thesis is given final approval by the committee with reference to content and form.

The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of Arts.

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Date

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Director