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Acculturation and self-esteem of Mexican American college students

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ACCULTURATION AND SELF-ESTEEM OF MEXICAN AMERICAN

COLLEGE STUDENTS

by

Robert Ashby Henley

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In the Graduate College

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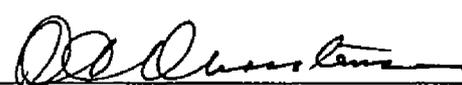1 9 9 4

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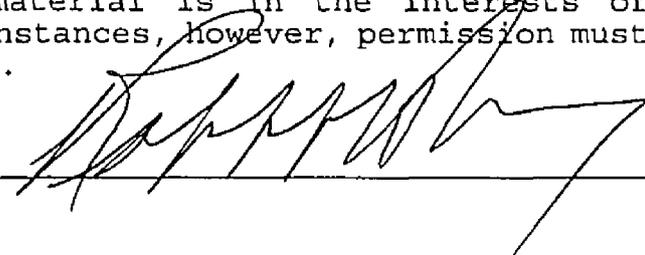
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

DEDICATION

Words fail in any effort to express the depth of my feelings for my wife's cheerful and loving willingness to accept the enormous changes and challenges which made it possible to return to school and, ultimately, to reach this goal. As is everything else I do, it is with the deepest love that I dedicate this thesis to Carmen Ortiz Henley.

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ABSTRACT

This study sought to examine patterns of acculturation among a sample of 18 Mexican American college students and to compare them with participants' scores on a self-esteem scale, which was selected as a measure of adjustment. Mendoza's Cultural Life Style Inventory was used to assess acculturation due to its ability to provide a more precise profile of acculturation. Self-esteem was measured with the 10-item Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale. Although the findings did not indicate a statistically significant correlation between the two, the data contained in the acculturation assessments, particularly, suggested some interesting indications to the effect that while most have an overall dominant tendency of cultural shift, the tendencies exhibited in several individual dimensions more frequently tended to be cultural incorporation or cultural resistance. It was also noted that the self-esteem scores tended to be quite high.

Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

A culturally diverse population poses a number of challenges to the various human service professions, particularly to those providing counseling and other mental health services (Sue & Sue, 1990). One source of diversity is the influx of people through immigration. Political or economic circumstances often spur the movement of people across national boundaries which are, in many cases, cultural boundaries as well. Arriving members of other cultures bring with them their own values, attitudes, tastes, and beliefs which influence their behaviors. In order to serve these newcomers it is certainly necessary to study their cultures. However, it is also important to examine and understand the process by which they adapt and adjust to the culture of the host country.

One group which has been studied for a number of years is the Mexican American population in the United States. It is already a significantly large minority segment of the total population and it continues to grow through the steady migratory flow from the Republic of Mexico. On both the social as well as the individual level, understanding the process by which these newcomers to American society, and their descendants, acculturate within the mainstream culture

has been the focus of research attention within several disciplines. These include psychology, sociology, education, and social psychology. The importance of studying acculturation becomes evident in light of its relationship to a number of other variables relating to minorities. It has been linked to such matters as mental health status, the availability of social support, academic achievement, self-esteem, substance abuse, suicide, and other stress-related problems (Marin, Sabogal, Marin, Otero-Sabogal, & Perez-Stable, 1987; Mendoza, 1984; Moyerman & Forman, 1992).

In the past, faulty assumptions about acculturation encouraged inaccurate expectations of the Mexican American population, resulting in inappropriate decisions with regard to school children, misdiagnoses of Mexican American mental health patients and other errors in dealing with this population (Mendoza, 1984). In part this is explained by the fact that social scientists used what are now recognized as unsupported paradigms in studying the process by which immigrants adjust to life with the dominant culture (Ramirez, 1984). The concept of the "melting pot" is no longer recognized as an accurate picture of how people of different backgrounds have established themselves in the United States (Phinney, Chavira, & Williamson, 1992). More specifically, assimilation is not the generally expected outcome of acculturation.

By the same token, it is no longer acceptable to view a cultural group as a collection of individuals exhibiting homogeneity in all aspects of their behavior, values, attitudes, or goals (Mendoza, 1984). Accepting cultural stereotypes as a basis for studying any group of people has been recognized as a source of serious problems. This is as much the case for the study of culture and its relationship to group and individual behaviors as it is for the study of how the members of that culture acculturate (Buriel, 1984; Mendoza, 1984).

Problem Statement

In general, acculturation is a process resulting in changes of behaviors and attitudes which occur when persons from one culture regularly interact with persons of another culture (Berry, 1986; Mena, Padilla, & Maldonado, 1987; Mendoza, 1984; Moyerman & Forman, 1992). In theory acculturation has been understood to be a two-way process with some elements of the newcomers' culture being incorporated by the dominant society as elements of its culture are transmitted to the immigrants' culture (Berry, 1986). However, when describing the process from the perspective of the immigrants and their descendants, the emphasis has been on the newcomers' acquisition of the mainstream culture. It was long believed that acculturation occurred following a

conflict-replacement model leading eventually to assimilation (Ramirez, 1984). Essentially, where an immigrant's beliefs and values conflict with those of the mainstream culture, they will be dropped in favor of adopting those of the majority culture in order for the person's adjustment to be most successful. Not acquiring the mainstream culture, while acknowledged as a possible outcome, was nevertheless deemed to be unsatisfactory (Stonequist, 1964).

However, more recent research indicates that, as is the case with other dynamic processes relating to human behavior, acculturation is a much more complex multidimensional process involving a number of variables and with a variety of possible outcomes (Mendoza, 1989; Padilla, 1980). Mendoza (1984 & 1989) proposes a model which not only provides for distinct typologies of acculturative experience but also allows for measuring the degree to which a given subject has acculturated in each typology. These typologies, or styles, reflect the definition of acculturation which recognizes that it is more than a process whereby persons from one culture acquire the elements of another one. While this may be called a monocultural definition, a multicultural definition would also recognize that elements of both cultures, the traditional as well as the new, can be incorporated into a person's repertoire.

The main premise for the model, which appears to

distinguish it from some earlier ones, is the sociocultural variability of the Mexican American population. Hence, a model based on "... the assumption that all immigrants, regardless of their individual capacities, propensities, or preferences, will experience the same cultural adjustment processes, and assimilate at the same rate and to the same degree ... (Mendoza, 1984, p. 62) will produce a seriously misleading picture of their acculturation. Another premise is that acculturation must be measured by examining different areas of behavior, such as language use, friendship and marriage ties, dietary preferences, and so on. A third premise is that individuals are multifaceted and so may demonstrate differing types of acculturation in those various behavioral domains.

Using this model, Mendoza (1989) developed the Cultural Life Style Inventory which assesses the degree to which a subject has acculturated in each of three styles:

Cultural resistance - the subject's active or passive resistance to acquiring elements of the alternate culture;

Cultural incorporation - a process whereby the subject adapts elements from both the native and alternate cultures;

Cultural shift - the substitution of customs and practices of the alternate culture for those of the

native culture.

Thus the instrument produces a profile of the person's acculturative pattern from which the dominant style can then be determined.

Having, then, identified a model of acculturation, and a measurement rationale which more closely reflects the complexity of the process, it may be of some use to examine that experience in light of some measure of adjustment. Not only are different cultures likely to acculturate differently, but different individuals are likely to have different experiences. Comparing acculturative patterns to some other psychological and/or social variable could provide an understanding about which acculturative patterns seem to be more successful in terms of facilitating optimal adjustment to the larger society (Moyerman and Forman, 1992).

There has been a notable lack of consistency in the various studies which have been undertaken in this area (Marin, et al., 1987; Moyerman & Forman, 1992). A variety of methods for assessing acculturation have been used, such as generational status or language use, in conjunction with different measures of adjustment, including occupation or income information, educational achievement, and self-concept or self-esteem.

Self-esteem is a variable which has been used in various studies comparing different groups and circumstances including

racial and ethnic status, socioeconomic status, scholastic achievement, genders, age-related groups, and familial variables. In the vast majority of these studies, the focus was on how different circumstances are related to how persons see or feel about themselves (Wylie, 1979). There is general agreement among those who have studied human personality that self-esteem is important to the mental health of individuals. Depression and low self-esteem have been noted to occur together frequently; low self-esteem has also been commonly found among psychiatric patients, and a substantial number of those who seek counseling or psychotherapy for a variety of presenting complaints tend to report low self-esteem or a history of problems with their self esteem (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956; Coopersmith, 1967; Feder, 1988; Rosenberg, 1965; Sullivan, 1964; Sweeney, 1989;).

Apart from the intrapsychic problems, low self-esteem has also been identified as a factor in other areas as well. Persons with high self-esteem are generally perceived as socially more outgoing, demonstrating a greater degree of confidence in a variety of interpersonal behaviors, whereas those with low self-esteem are generally observed to be more withdrawn and isolated, less able to interact freely with others on different levels (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956; Bhatti, Derezotes, Kim, & Specht, 1989; Coopersmith, 1967; Rosenberg, 1965; Sullivan, 1964; Sweeney, 1989).

However, self-esteem has proven to be a particularly elusive aspect of the personality which has not lent itself to ready empirical definition or measurement. Numerous theorists and researchers have pursued various lines of inquiry to determine its nature and its origins (Bhatti, et al., 1992; Wylie, 1979). Generally, these explorations can be grouped into two traditions. The psychological tradition has focused more on the individual and the consequences of self-esteem on a person's behavior and psychological well-being; the sociological tradition has focused more on how a person's sense of self is influenced by different variables in the context of the social structure (Bhatti, et al., 1992).

Interestingly, it appears that one of the more successful efforts to develop a measure of self-esteem, Rosenberg's Self-esteem Scale, has emerged from the sociological tradition. Treating self-esteem as an attitude apparently has provided a reasonably sound method of examining it as a variable linked to other factors in studies using larger sample sizes (Rosenberg, 1965; Wylie, 1989). It may be less helpful to those working with individuals in a clinical setting because of the essentially superficial quality of its scores, where it might prove more appropriate to use other means to explore the highly phenomenological intricacies of a single individual's self-esteem and its role in that person's behavior (Jackson, 1984). Nevertheless there appears to be no indication that

either approach would produce contradictory conclusions about whether the individual held himself or herself, generally, in high or low regard.

This study, then, was undertaken to examine a group of college students of Mexican American heritage to determine if the use of a more detailed and precise measure of acculturation would provide a more accurate insight into whether a particular style of acculturation might enhance adjustment as indicated by a score on a self-esteem scale.

Hypotheses

1. Mexican American college students whose dominant acculturation tendency is cultural incorporation will score more highly on a self-esteem scale.

2. For those whose dominant pattern is cultural shift, their self-esteem scores will be lower.

Research Questions

1. Is there a correlation between acculturation tendency and self-esteem?

2. For those students who demonstrate a dominant tendency, is it reflected across all measured dimensions of acculturation?

Definition of Terms

Acculturation For the purpose of this study, acculturation is defined as a process of cultural change which results when two cultures come into regular contact.

Generational status This refers to which generation a person of immigrant descent belongs. The first generation are those who emigrated to a new country; the second generation are their offspring who were born in the new country. The third generation refers to those born of the second generation, while persons of mixed generation, a term which is sometimes used, are those whose parents are not of the same generation.

Mexican American A person who is either a native of Mexico who has emigrated to the United States or who is a descendant of Mexican Americans and self-identifies primarily as such, regardless whether the term Mexican American, Chicano, Hispanic, or other related term is used.

Self-esteem An evaluative attitude a person holds toward himself or herself with regard to self-acceptance and self-worth.

Summary

This chapter presented several models for understanding acculturation. It discussed some of the shortcomings of earlier models in light of the growing acceptance of cultural diversity and multiculturalism in the United States. It also

discussed the nature and importance of self-esteem. It went on to point out why comparing a Mexican American's pattern of acculturation with their score on a self-esteem scale might identify a more successful pattern in terms of facilitating adjustment. Two hypotheses and two research questions were stated and a list of relevant definitions presented.

Chapter Two

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter will examine the definition of acculturation, the study of acculturation from a historical perspective, and the study of the acculturation of Mexican immigrants and Mexican Americans. It will also examine some landmark studies on the nature and measurement of self-esteem, the significance of self-esteem, and, finally, previous studies which compared a measure of acculturation of subjects with their scores on a self-esteem scale.

Definition of Acculturation

Berry (1980a) provides a very cogent outline defining acculturation as it has been studied traditionally. Noting that the first appearance of the concept of acculturation was in 1880, he quotes two definitions which are generally regarded as classic and which may be helpfully included here. The first emerged from the field of anthropology in 1936, formulated by Redfield, Linton and Herskovits:

> Acculturation comprehends those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups ... under this definition acculturation is to be distinguished from culture change, of which it is but one aspect,

and assimilation, which is at times a phase of acculturation. It is also to be differentiated from diffusion, which while occurring in all instances of acculturation, is not only a phenomena which frequently takes place without the occurrence of the types of contact between peoples specified in the definition above, but also constitutes only one aspect of the process of acculturation (p. 9).

40 years ago the Social Science Research Council developed a definition of acculturation as

...culture change that is initiated by the conjunction of two or more autonomous cultural systems. Acculturative change may be the consequence of direct cultural transmission; it may be derived from noncultural causes, such as ecological or demographic modifications induced by an impinging culture; it may be delayed, as with internal adjustments following upon the acceptance of alien traits or patterns; or it may be a reactive adaptation of traditional modes of life. Its dynamics can be seen as the selective adaptation of value systems, the processes of integration and differentiation, the generation of developmental sequences, and the operation of role determinants and personality factors (pp. 9-10).

Berry then goes on to discuss several features and dimensions of acculturation which may be derived from these definitions. In describing the nature of the process he points out that not only does it require contact between cultures, there must also be change in either or both as a result of the contact. The course of change, according to Berry, must start with the contact. The purpose and kind of contact, as well as its duration, can have considerable impact on the degree of acculturation. He suggests that the next step is probably conflict on the part of the acculturating group, particularly as it resists efforts to encourage the

abandonment of its traditional cultural traits. The third step, then, must be adaptation in order to minimize conflict. He notes that the concept of adaptation provides more flexibility in terms of examining the different ways in which a group responds to the stimulus of contact than did the earlier idea of assimilation.

He also points out that the definitions given above suggest that acculturation is a two-level process: it occurs at the group level as well as the individual, and would be appropriately examined as both a social experience as well as a psychological one. However, he insists that in order to approach the issue of measurement as it relates to acculturation, one would need to first examine several aspects of the process from the group's perspective. This would include its experience of the contact and conflict as well as its various modes of adaptation.

Study of Acculturation

Berry (1986) notes that early studies of acculturation were undertaken primarily by anthropologists and sociologists. The field of study usually involved the impact on a "primitive" society when it came into contact with another culture. Contact was most often brought about when representatives of "modern", i.e., Western or European societies, arrived on the scene as explorers, missionaries,

colonists, etc. The result was the development of models of acculturation reflecting the ethnocentric bias of the observers, themselves members of the intruding culture (Berry, 1980b; Mendoza, 1989).

Usually, the studies selected a trait, such as language or superstitiousness and measured how much of the new language had been acquired by the indigenous subjects, or how many traditional superstitions had been abandoned or retained, in order to determine the degree of acculturation. Thus, the acculturation of an individual was essentially a measure of assimilation which had taken place with regard to only one dimension (Berry, 1980b; Buriel, 1984; Mendoza, 1984; Ramirez, 1984).

The studies of acculturation involving immigrant groups in the United States similarly examined the process as one in which movement should occur along one direction of a continuum in order to achieve the most successful outcome. One end of the continuum represented the completely unacculturated individual, perhaps a newly-arrived immigrant who spoke no English and was unfamiliar with the customs of the dominant culture. The other end represented a person who had acquired fluency in the language of the mainstream culture. The process of traversing this continuum starts with the experience of conflict between the native, or traditional, characteristics when the acculturating individual interacts

with the dominant group. This conflict is resolved most successfully with the abandonment of the old characteristic and its replacement with a new characteristic from the mainstream culture (Ramirez, 1984).

According to Stonequist (1964), this was the pattern which is most likely to occur in the United States wherein one finds "a situation of open resources and democratic ideals [and the] barriers to assimilation are not considered insurmountable, with the possible exception of racial barriers..." (p. 337). The alternatives to assimilation, in the event a person or group was not able to surmount the barriers to acceptance were either to form a nationalistic and separatist program within the minority community, which would not be practical in the U.S., or to remain indefinitely in a marginal situation. Further, prolonged marginality did not necessarily consign a person to an unhappy, bitter life inasmuch as satisfaction could be found thorough family, friends and work. However, he very much believed in the "melting pot" paradigm which prevailed for many years, even though he stated that "the ideal of a culturally pluralistic society is reconcilable with the requirements of an effective democracy..." (1964, p. 343).

A new paradigm of multiculturalism based on positively accepting cultural diversity has emerged in recent years (Phinney et. al., 1992; Szapocznik & Kurtines, 1980). One

indicator of this shift is the public policy decision to provide legal support and financing for bilingual education in public schools (Buriel, 1984). Certainly multiculturalism has had an impact on the study of acculturation. The fundamentally negative values which had been placed traditionally on different cultures, as reflected in the expectation that non-White, non-Anglo-European, non-English-speaking people settling in the United States would more commonly choose to abandon their native cultures in favor of assimilation into the mainstream society, have started shifting in a different direction. Studies of cultural change and adaptation have also begun to reflect a more positive attitude toward other cultures in that newer models of acculturation put a much greater emphasis on biculturalism and multiculturalism, questioning the concept of conflict in the acculturation process (Buriel, 1984; Mendoza, 1984; Ramirez, 1984; Krause, Bennett, & Tran, 1989; Moyerman & Forman, 1992; Phinney, et al., 1992).

Berry (1980b) reported on some interesting findings with regard to the acculturative experience of migrants who move to new countries, as opposed to those who experience acculturation as a result of the arrival of a new culture into their midst. While it is not universal, there are indications that acculturative stress is more likely to be found among this population. What appears to make the difference is the

attitude in a host country toward different cultures. A prevailing expectation of assimilation in societies which are less tolerant of other cultures lends itself to higher levels of stress, marked perhaps by higher rates of admission to mental hospitals among the immigrants. Societies which have a greater tolerance for cultural diversity, allowing persons to retain, in particular, the support of others from the same cultural or ethnic community also reflect lower indicators of stress among the immigrant population.

In a similar vein, Szapocznik & Kurtines (1980) reported on several studies conducted with Cuban Americans in Dade County, FL, which has witnessed a dramatic shift in demographics between 1960 and 1980. Of particular significance here was one study of Cuban American junior high school students which indicated that those rated as being most highly adjusted by their teachers also scored most highly as being acculturated in both the Anglo American and the Cuban cultures. Szapocznik & Kurtines contend that a unidimensional model of acculturation (measuring only the degree to which a person acquires elements of the host culture) would be appropriate where the total cultural context into which an immigrant settles is monocultural. In a multicultural setting it is necessary to examine the degree of a person's involvement in both the host culture as well as the traditional culture. Their studies indicate that adjustment

difficulties, as reflected in such areas as intergenerational conflicts within families or drug abuse, are greater when acculturation is limited to only one dimension. Thus, "biculturalism implies that the individual can participate in two cultural contexts. Immigrants living in bicultural communities such as Dade County must be able to effectively interact with both of these contexts in order to avoid the detrimental effects of acculturation such as psychosocial or behavioral disorders (pp 155-157)."

Acculturation of Mexican Immigrants and Mexican Americans

Padilla (1980) points out that there is little current information available regarding the impact acculturation has on psychological functioning. In developing a model which would facilitate such an examination, he proposes that it must take into account two significant elements. Cultural awareness is the extent of a person's knowledge of cultural traits, values, customs, and ethnic loyalty. Ethnic loyalty refers to the person's preferences in relation to cultural orientations. He suggests that the person's loyalties would serve as indices of both cultural awareness and ethnic identity and so be able to reflect the degree of acculturation. The greater the degree of preference for the ethnic culture would indicate a lesser degree of acculturation.

This approach would consider the process as multidimensional, rather than one which can be adequately understood by looking at only one variable, such as generational status. Five dimensions were identified: language familiarity and usage, which includes knowledge of both the native and the host country's languages as well as language preference; cultural heritage which includes a person's knowledge of cultural material from both cultures as well as preferences; ethnicity is the degree of ethnic pride and identity one holds with regard to either culture; inter-ethnic interaction and inter-ethnic distance are two factors which markedly impact the rate of acculturation and would include the perception of discrimination.

Usefully, Padilla's model does underscore some of the complexity involved in understanding the acculturation process by identifying various dimensions associated with it. However, it is clear that this model relies on the traditional definitions and treats acculturation as a one-way process, which would preclude assessing what occurs among those persons who develop bilingually or biculturally.

Buriel (1984) presents a substantial review of literature relating to studies of Mexican Americans in order to refute the damaging culture model which had long been associated with the study of that population. He discusses a variety of earlier studies which portray the disadvantages of being

Mexican American in relation to educational and occupational success and the seeming link between being part of that culture and criminal behavior. However, in later research which examined these adjustment measures relative to the degree of presumed assimilation, it appears that abandonment of the traditional culture is associated with less success in school and the work place and with greater deviancy. In other words, second-generation Mexican Americans tend to do better than those of later generations who are likelier to have adopted more of the mainstream culture's elements at the cost of giving up those of the traditional culture.

Ramirez (1984) challenges the notion that conflict is likely to be a feature of the acculturative process for most Mexicans or Mexican Americans. Perhaps some experienced conflict with the dominant culture when they encountered significant discrimination in the areas where they had settled. However, for a majority of this group residing in locales where there was already a reasonably well developed Mexican American community, he suggests that the adjustment was a much smoother process.

He proposes a biculturalism-multiculturalism model which would fit the situations of many Mexican Americans more accurately. Its premise is that persons of one cultural background living in close proximity to another culture with which there is regular and on-going interaction are more than

capable of acquiring values, traits and behaviors of both groups. However, assessing their degree of acculturation by measuring the degree to which they have acquired elements of the dominant culture only would present an erroneous picture of assimilation. Awareness of and familiarity with the dominant culture would be only part of their cultural experience. A more complete picture would require assessment of their familiarity with and involvement in the traditional culture, as well. He proposes a model based on four tenets:

> 1.   Acculturation is continued growth and development in the person's original culture as well as in the lifestyles and values of the other sociocultural systems in which he or she participates.
>
> 2.   Growth and development take place in different life-domains of the different cultures with which the person interacts. For example, at the same time, a person may be developing in the familial domain of one culture, the educational domain of another and the work domain of still another.
>
> 3.   Growth and development in different cultures and in different domains within cultures provides the person with personality-building elements that make him or her more flexible, adaptable, and understanding of others, and thereby more able to participate in different sociocultural systems.
>
> 4.   The personality-building elements, which the person acquires from different cultures, have the potential for uniting to develop multicultural patterns of behavior, multicultural perspectives, transcendence, and a multicultural orientation to life (pp. 91-92).

Mendoza (1984) introduces the concept of sociocultural variability as it relates to acculturation by pointing out

that within-group differentiation is often ignored as much as between- group distinctions. He notes the historical situations where the proportion of Mexican American school children who were determined to be retarded was much greater than among Anglo students. There also have been problems in mental health diagnosis where Mexican Americans have been misdiagnosed because of a failure to recognize either culture-specific symptomatology or because different customs were determined to be pathological. These failures to pay attention to between-group differences are as problematic as approaching different groups armed with some cross-cultural information and applying it, stereotypically, to the whole group.

He also describes two basic models of acculturation. The traditional model focuses on the extent to which a person from one culture acquires the customs, values, and language of another culture. Mendoza terms this the unilevel model, wherein measurement is made along a single bipolar continuum. Often, the basis of measurement involves a single variable, such as generational status, or a dimension comprised of a group of significantly correlated variables, such as speaking, reading, and writing in the language of the host culture. Thus, a Mexican American who is fluent in all three forms of language use with regard to English would score as highly acculturated.

Another model is one which Mendoza refers to as bilevel. Essentially, it examines placement along two continua which are the extent to which a person has acquired or failed to acquire elements of another culture and the extent a person has retained or failed to retain elements of the native culture. This model is noted as providing a more complete picture of a person's acculturative experience. For instance, the example noted above of the individual who fluently speaks, reads, and writes English and so is characterized as highly acculturated may also be equally fluent in Spanish. How then would one compare that person's acculturation to another's who only uses English, having no knowledge of Spanish? Mendoza's assumption is that each represents a different type of acculturation. The unilevel model would classify both as highly acculturated whereas a bilevel model would distinguish between them.

The use of a bilevel model, then, provides for identifying different types of acculturation. Citing an earlier study in which Mendoza and Martinez collaborated, Mendoza lists the four types which they described based on a bilevel model. The first is cultural resistance, which is actively, or passively, not acquiring elements of the mainstream culture and retaining those of the traditional one. Cultural shift reflects a pattern of substituting the elements of the host culture for those of the native culture, or what

has also been referred to as assimilation. Cultural incorporation is defined as adapting customs from both cultures while cultural transmutation refers to altering the cultural elements of both cultures and forming a distinct subculture.

The Mendoza and Martinez model also rests on several additional premises. They propose that acculturation is multidimensional and so would have to be assessed using several indices. Also, the process is multifaceted which means that a person might demonstrate different types of acculturation in different behavioral domains. For instance, in choosing friends and in selecting a marriage partner a person might display cultural resistance while his or her preferences in dress and music might reflect cultural shift. However, in patterns of dietary preferences and celebrating holidays and knowledge of humor a person's type might be that of cultural incorporation. A final premise is that acculturation is somewhat contextual, meaning that in one situation, such as a social gathering composed of mostly Mexican Americans, a person's behavior might reflect cultural resistance. On the job, though, where most co-workers are not Mexican Americans, the person may display a pattern of cultural shift.

Mendoza also discussed various methodological issues involved in developing an instrument which can assess

acculturation based on the above model with a reasonable degree of reliability and various types of validity. Although quite challenging, he asserts its importance in light of various issues and consequences relating to erroneous or inadequate models for understanding the acculturative process. Essentially, he argues, it is necessary to approach the study of acculturation from a multicultural perspective, abandoning altogether any models which are based on assimilation alone. Several years later Mendoza (1989) presented the results of his efforts to develop an assessment instrument, seemingly with some success, based on this model.

In light of what appears to be a potential for more accurately assessing acculturation, Mendoza's model would seem to be a more appropriate basis for use in efforts to understand the process of acculturation. It would also seem to be more appropriately used in any examination of the relationship between acculturation and other variables, especially those associated with behaviors and attitudes of interest to the counseling and mental health professions. In addition, preliminary examinations of the reliability and validity of the instrument he developed appear to be reasonably satisfactory. For these reasons it is the model of acculturation on which the current study is based.

Self-esteem

A number of writers have noted the difficulty of establishing reliable empirical evidence of what self-esteem is and how it works. Wylie (1979) sums it up with this somewhat discouraging observation in the final chapter of her extensive review:

> It is fascinating that hundreds of thousands of research hours have been devoted to studying self-concept variables, especially over-all self-regard, and that both lay persons and professional individuals from many disciplines evidently continue to be impressed with the importance of the topic despite the paucity of definitive findings and, indeed, despite numerous resounding failures to obtain support for some of their most strongly held hypotheses (p. 685).

She does provide an extensive review of studies which examines aspects of self-concept, including self-esteem and racial/ethnic status. A substantial majority of the studies involved comparisons between African Americans and Whites. Interestingly, there appears to have been a tendency for members of the racial minority to score somewhat higher than those in the majority on self-esteem measures. Nevertheless, given the methodological weaknesses inherent in most of the studies, this finding that membership in a minority group does not necessarily lead to diminished self-esteem cannot be

deemed to be conclusively demonstrated.

However, some landmark studies have provided a useful basis for assessing self-esteem as a variable to be studied in connection with other behavioral variables.

Coopersmith's (1967) study on the antecedents of self-esteem involved extensive investigations on a sample of 85 white, male preadolescents. As did Rosenberg (1965), Coopersmith treated self-esteem as an evaluative attitude toward a similar construct definition of self. However, the focus of examination was not directly on sociocultural factors, but rather how individuals acquire an evaluation of themselves. Noting the dearth of empirical evidence in support of different theories of self-esteem, Coopersmith developed a theoretical formulation, based on the work of a number of personality theorists, which identified four determinant variables.

The first variable was success. His findings indicate that general public standards of success are not generally the bases of appraisal which individuals use to measure their own degree of success. Instead,

> the most notable bases for judgments of success are
> acceptance, the possibilities of individual
> expression and dissent (within limits), and
> academic performance. Acceptance is generally
> manifested by parental care, concern and attention;

individual expression by open discussion within well-defined limits; and academic performance, by competence relative to the members of one's group (p. 243).

Thus, some portion of self-esteem appears to be related to the family of origin and one's peer group.

The second variable, values, suggests that successes are weighted according to the person's system of values. However, value preferences appear to be less idiosyncratic and more likely to be based on group standards. "The general social norms of one's group become internalized as self-values, so that self-judgments are made in regard to them rather than in regard to more private and more independently derived standards (pp. 244-245)." Individual differences enter in connection with how a person assesses the degree to which he or she has attained a commonly valued goal, a process which Coopersmith suggests is a part of another variable, defenses.

Another variable is aspirations. Generally, it appears that while persons with both high and low self-esteem similarly pursue public goals which are socially defined as worthwhile, there is a marked difference in terms of the personal goals. High self-esteem reflects higher expectations and the experience of meeting those expectations. Persons with lower self-esteem not only set lower personal aspirations, they are also more likely to believe that they are less

successful in living up to them. Identifying and striving to accomplish one's personal goals, in fact, appears to be a function of expectation: high self-esteem expects success, low self-esteem anticipates failure.

Defenses, as a determinant variable in the development of self-esteem, refers to the manner a person acquires for dealing with the stresses associated with failure and ambiguity, or, more accurately, the threat of failure and consequent loss of self-esteem.

> Persons with positive self-attitudes apparently
> start from the initial position of assurance that
> they can deal with adversity; ... Meaning is, after
> all, imposed upon a situation and persons who feel
> powerful and adequate to deal with threat are less
> likely to have their confidence shaken than are
> persons who are fearful and unsure of their
> abilities (p. 248).

Thus, although Coopersmith's findings indicate that the acquisition of self-esteem and mechanisms for its maintenance is very closely related to parental treatment of children and the family atmosphere, it is not clear what the impact is, if any, of belonging to an ethnic minority.

Rosenberg (1965) conducted an extensive study of self-esteem using a sample of over 5,000 high school juniors and seniors in a number of schools in New York State. Rosenberg's

approach was distinctly focused on self-esteem in the context of the social structure, particularly with the goal of identifying social factors which may have an impact on how persons regard themselves, as well as some of the consequences of high or low self-esteem.

He noted that self-esteem in adolescents could be different from what might be found in adults or younger children. Adults have attained some measure of socially recognized achievement and younger children are more likely to base their perceptions on familial experiences. Adolescents, on the other hand, are experiencing the transition between the two stages.

In any event, he did develop a scale for use in the study which was intended to measure self-esteem. He observed that the scale measure what could be regarded as self-acceptance. Those who scored higher tended to demonstrate a degree of confidence in their ability to improve themselves, acknowledging that, while they do not consider themselves to be any worse off than anyone else, they do possess shortcomings. High self-esteem also reflects self-respect and a sense of one's own worth, without believing that one is necessarily superior to others.

Low self-esteem, on the other hand, can result in increased levels of anxiety and stress with related physical and psychological symptoms. Some of the stressors could be

linked to the disadvantage in relating to others which includes hampered ability to trust and respect others, the need for investing energy into maintaining a false front, as well as coping with some degree of isolation.

Rosenberg also notes that the differences in levels of self-esteem between different racial/ethnic groups, although not conclusively demonstrated, do not appear to be related to the group's prestige within the whole society. He suggests that other factors, such as culturally-defined styles of interaction between parents and children or other child rearing practices, might account for the differences. He also indicates that differences along socioeconomic lines may have a similar etiology rather than reflecting internalization of the majority's evaluation of a person's group.

One of the most useful outcomes of the study was the Self-esteem Scale which was devised for it. Its construction was based on several requirements: it needed to demonstrate face validity, and it had to be easy and quick to both administer and complete. Obviously it had to be able to provide a measurement along one continuum, as well as provide correlations with other indicators of self-esteem. Rosenberg believes that these objectives were met.

Twenty-five years after the study, Wylie (1989) found that not only has the scale been widely used, but also that is has consistently tended to demonstrate a reasonable degree of

reliability as well as construct validity. Wylie does note that "because scale scores are so skewed, 'low self-esteem' scores are close to the numerical center of the scale, which raises the question whether such scores validly indicate low self-esteem or may come from random responding due to lack of cooperation or attention, poor reading ability, and so on" (p. 29). Thus, one would be cautious about interpreting measured differences between groups with different reading ability, ethnic background, or socioeconomic level.

Significance of Self-esteem

In general, self-esteem has been examined in relation to several psychological and social variables. A noted example is its apparent direct correlation with depression (Feder, 1988; Rosenberg, 1965). Low self-esteem has also been linked to child abuse, both as a possible causal factor when found among parents, as well as a consequent (Bhatti et al., 1989).

Self-esteem also appears to play a significant role in the area of interpersonal functioning. It has been noted that persons with higher self-esteem experience less stress and anxiety about interacting with others (Coopersmith, 1967; Sweeney, 1989). Having a degree of self-acceptance, they display a greater willingness to cooperate with others.

According to Sullivan (1965), respect for self is linked to respect for and from others, a necessary prerequisite to

cooperation and collaboration. Not surprisingly, then, individuals with low self-esteem, hampered by the requirements of defending themselves from threats to their feelings about self, tend to be considerably more self-absorbed, less involved with others (friends, family, spouse), and thus display higher levels of stress and anxiety.

Acculturation and Self-esteem

For Mexican Americans, the trend toward a multicultural model of acculturation has particular significance. Earlier studies of acculturation with this population, biased in favor of the mainstream culture, tended to conclude that the Mexican/Mexican-American culture was damaging (Buriel, 1984). However, when models which do not devalue traditional cultures were developed, the data emerging from various studies began to paint a much different picture of the process in terms of which adjustment patterns lend themselves to greater success, as measured by various criteria. It appears that individuals who retained more of the traditional culture while adapting to the mainstream society were likely to have fewer mental health problems, attain a higher level of educational achievement or earn more money. (Buriel, 1984; Krause et al., 1989).

The assessment of a person's acculturative pattern, when compared with that person's overall level of self-esteem, is expected to indicate whether one or more patterns of

acculturation will facilitate adjustment for Mexican Americans. There are complex demands made on those who were raised in one culture, and perhaps continue to interact in that culture in the familial, social, and/or other domains, but who also function in the education, work, or other domains of another culture. Inasmuch as self-esteem may be a predictor of stress among those attempting to meet this challenge, as well as a mediating variable between stressors and the degree of stress a person experiences (Mena, et al., 1987), it could serve as an indicator of patterns of acculturation which are less stressful.

When, as has been the case for Mexican Americans, acceptance by the mainstream society is denied to members of a minority group on the basis of physical characteristics, regardless of how completely those individuals assimilate into the mainstream culture, it would be expected that such a pattern of acculturation would not lend itself to the development of any high level of self-esteem.

There have been some studies conducted which examined acculturation and self-esteem among different populations. Five of the more relevant ones are reviewed here.

Knight, Kagan, Nelson, & Gumbiner (1978), studied a sample of fourth, fifth, and sixth graders at an elementary school located in a predominantly Mexican American community in California. As a measure of acculturation, the children's

generational status was used, and only those who had not been born in Mexico (first generation) were included, as was a group of Anglo children in the same school. There were approximately 20-25 boys and a similar number of girls in each of the three groups, Anglos, second generation and third generation Mexican Americans. The study involved several measures of adjustment, including academic achievement, field independence, locus of control, as well as self esteem, which was measured using the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory. The results indicated that the mean score for second generation Mexican Americans was very close to that of the Anglo control group, although achievement scores were significantly higher for the Anglos. Although there was some increase in the achievement scores for the third generation group over the second generation's, there was also a slight drop in the mean self-esteem score. Unfortunately, beyond speculating on possible reasons, there was no information as to how likely the difference was genuine or in fact was merely a chance variation.

The use of generational status as a measure of acculturation which reflects the use of the earlier model of the process (Padilla, 1980) and the small sample size raise questions about the usefulness of the study.

Torres (1981) conducted a study of Puerto Rican men between the ages of 18 and 54. The study's purpose was to

secure data which would support, or fail to support, the hypothesis that a greater degree of assimilation would be associated with greater self-esteem. Sixty subjects were interviewed at length to determine their degree of acculturation while the California Psychological Inventory was administered to assess personality dimensions, including self-evaluation.

The results indicated that measuring acculturation only as a degree of assimilation produces a seriously inadequate picture of the process or its relationship to self-esteem. Notwithstanding that this study involved Puerto Ricans, and only males, it usefully supports the concept that acculturation is a complex process.

Prigoff (1985) conducted a study of self-esteem, ethnic identity, job aspiration and school stress in a sample which included 130 Mexican American high school students in a midwestern urban barrio. The purpose of the study was to examine the validity of the theory that members of ethnic minorities experience diminished self-esteem as a consequence of internalizing social stigma. Consequently, no direct comparison of acculturation and self-esteem appears to have been made.

It was noted, though, that the self-esteem of the Mexican Americans was not, overall, significantly diminished. Also, there was an inverse relationship between length of time spent

in the U.S. and the use of Spanish or preference for an ethnic lifestyle. It was also noted that ethnic pride did not have a linear relationship with the use of Spanish. Monolingual Spanish speakers tended to have the least pride in their heritage while the highest levels were found among bilingual students, lending support, albeit indirectly, for the contention of others that assimilation is not likely to enhance the self-concept of Mexican Americans.

Padilla, Wagatsuma & Lindholm (1985) conducted a study with 114 Japanese and Japanese-Americans undergraduate students to examine the relationship between stress and different variables including level of acculturation, generational status and several personality variables including self-esteem. In this instance, stress is assumed to be associated with the acculturation process. Overall, self-esteem was found to be the best predictor of such stress. It is also noted that higher self-esteem was more likely to be found among the more acculturated individuals, which were also those whose generational status was third generation or later.

This study involved Japanese/Japanese-Americans, whose culture, arguably, is more different from the American culture than is the Mexican/Mexican American culture, which does have some origins in European or Western traditions. Therefore it is difficult to compare its findings to studies of the Mexican American experience. However, that self-esteem does play some

role, and is associated with acculturation, probably applies to the Mexican American experiences.

Mena, Padilla, & Maldonado (1987) conducted a study with 214 multicultural undergraduates which compared, among other things, self-esteem scores on a modified version of Coopersmith's Self-Esteem Inventory to their generational status. It appeared that immigrants, particularly those who emigrated after age 12, had a significantly lower mean score on the self-esteem measure than did the second- and third-generation groups. However there were only small differences in the mean self-esteem scores between immigrants and the mixed-generation group, and between the second- and third-generation groups.

Again, as in the study by Kagan, et al., the use of generational status as a measure of acculturation does not provide an opportunity to compare self-esteem scores to any specific *pattern* of acculturation. Also, the results of this study are based on a sample which included students from a number of different cultures which makes it difficult to compare its findings to a study of persons from only one cultural background.

Summary

The shift away from an assimilationist model of acculturation to one which is based on a multicultural perspective has resulted in new understandings about how the process may occur with immigrants from Mexico and their descendants. Newer models provide for the possibility that the process of acculturation might result in several different outcomes. In light of the importance of self-esteem in social interactions, it can serve as a useful adjustment measure which could help identify which pattern or patterns of acculturation may be most successful and least stressful.

Chapter Three

PROCEDURES

The purpose of this study was to compare scores on self-esteem and acculturation inventories given to a sample of Mexican American college students in an effort to determine if there is a significant correlation between self-esteem and specific acculturation tendencies which reflects a bicultural pattern, wherein a person has retained traditional cultural customs and values, while also acquiring behaviors and customs of the mainstream culture.

Population

The sample for this study consisted of 100 Hispanic students at a large Southwestern university. The respondents were part of a larger sample of Hispanic students which was selected for a study by the Office of Hispanic Student Affairs. Efforts were made to assemble as randomly selected a group as possible, with regard to age, gender, and class standing.

The sample was drawn from a group of college students who self-identified as Hispanic on university registration forms. A list of potential participants was then randomly selected. Packets containing the materials were mailed to 100 individuals on the list. Twenty-four individuals responded of

which six were not of Mexican American origin. The remaining 18 constituted the actual study sample.

Instruments and Data Collection Procedures

The packets mailed to each participant contained the following:

(1)   a cover letter from the Assistant Dean for Hispanic Student Affairs explaining the study with instructions for those choosing to participate (Appendix A);

(2)   an information sheet, in a question-and-answer format explaining the nature and purpose of the study as well as the voluntariness of participation and the confidentiality of such participation (Appendix A);

(3)   a statement of understanding which, when signed, indicated the participant's informed consent (Appendix A);

(4)   a demographic survey form which also explains that participation is voluntary and the respondent gives consent by completing the materials, as well as a request to complete the forms anonymously by not putting a name on the materials (Appendix B);

(5)   a copy of the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Appendix C);

(6) a copy of the Cultural Life Style Inventory in English developed by Richard Mendoza; and

(7) a stamped, self-addressed, envelope.

Items (4), (5), and (6) were coded in order to match them with each participant.

Completed Life Style Inventories were scored in accordance with the directions provided by the author. The scored responses produce a composite life style profile by computing the proportions answered in a cultural resistance (CR), cultural incorporation (CI), or cultural shift (CS) manner. Also, a dominant tendency may be identified when the difference between the two most frequent tendencies is statistically significant. When there is no statistically significant difference between the two most frequent life style tendencies, the person is classified as nondominant.

In addition, the responses can provide another profile of the person's acculturation in five different dimensions, identified by Mendoza as (1) Intra-Family Language Factor; (2) Extra-Family Language Factor; (3) Social Affiliation and Activities Factor; (4) Cultural Familiarity and Activities Factor; (5) Cultural Identification and Pride Factor. This profile is particularly helpful for describing the acculturation of those who have no dominant acculturation tendency.

The Self-Esteem Inventory was scored as a four-point Likert

scale on each of the ten items, scoring disagreement with the negative items as positive responses. The maximum score, therefore, was 40.

Reliability and Validity

Cultural Life Style Inventory

Mendoza (1989) reports that the instrument's reliability was determined in several ways:

Internal consistency with regard to five dimensions of acculturation was measured using Cronbach's alpha. A sample of 68 first generation, 76 second generation and 41 third generation Mexican-Americans who's ages ranged from 16 to 52 years produced the following:

Intra-family language factor - alpha = .87

Extra-family language factor - alpha = .91

Social affiliation and activities factor - alpha = .89

Cultural familiarity and activities factor - alpha = .84

Cultural identification and pride factor - alpha = .89

Temporal stability was assessed using the test-retest method on a sample of 88 Mexican-Americans and 59 Anglo-Americans between 16 and 49 years old. The interval between administrations was two weeks for all members of the sample. The Mexican-American sample was divided into two groups. One (n = 51) took both versions in English. The correlation of the scores showed r = .91 (p < .001) for the Mexican American

sample, while the Anglo-American sample had an r = .95 (p < .001).

Validity was determined as follows:

Content validity was determined by first soliciting lists of cultural traits from both Mexican-Americans and Anglo-Americans which were different in each culture. Those items which were most commonly listed were incorporated into a pilot inventory which, along with multiple option responses, were submitted to two Anglo-Americans and two Mexican-Americans who were asked to rate each item on a five point scale as to whether it sampled and measured dimensions of the acculturation construct. Those items with the highest mean ratings were retained for a second pilot inventory which was used to establish item discrimination. The second pilot inventory was administered to a sample of 97 first-generation Mexican-Americans and 82 Anglo-Americans. The samples ranged in age between 17 and 55 years. Those items which produced responses typical of 90% or more of the Mexican-American sample and which were distinct from those responses typical of 90% or more of the Anglo-American sample were retained for the final version of the inventory.

Another method involved generating three hypotheses regarding generational level and acculturation. The first hypothesis was that cultural resistance scores would decrease with successive generations. Scores did show that traits of

the Mexican culture were relinquished at a decreasing monotomic rate (eta = .543, p < .001). Secondly, it was hypothesized that cultural shift scores would increase. Results showed that Anglo-American traits were acquired at an increasing monotomic rate (eta = .606, p < .001). The third hypothesis was that cultural incorporation scores would be lowest for first generation subjects, highest among the second generation and somewhere between the two for third generation subjects. However the results showed that traits from both cultures tended to exist side by side in subjects regardless of their generation (eta = .010, p < .05).

Another method which was based on generated hypotheses started with the assumption that contact with persons of the alternate culture "could significantly enhance the process of cultural change (p. 380)." It was hypothesized that there would be a significant positive correlation between exposure to Anglo-Americans in various settings and cultural shift scores, which in fact produced an r = .656, (p < .001). It was also hypothesized that there would be a significant negative correlation between exposure to Anglo-Americans and the cultural resistance and incorporation scores. Indeed, results showed an r = -.60 (p < .01) and r = -.247 (p < .01) on the respective correlations.

Assuming that persons who did not plan to remain in the U.S. would have less reason to acquire traits from an

alternate culture, it was hypothesized that self-perceived transients would score higher on cultural resistance and lower on shift and incorporation. Scores showed that eta = .458 (p < .001) for cultural resistance, eta = .420 (p < .001) and eta = .390 (p < .001) for cultural incorporation.

The final method for assessing validity was based on measuring the degree of concordance between the self-perceptions of selected persons (n = 62) completing the inventory and the perceptions of those persons by a member of their immediate family who completed the inventory by rating the member of the sample. The correlation was r = .71 (p < .001).

Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale

In the New York state sample which Rosenberg used for his study conducted between 1959 and 1965, the Cronbach alpha was .77. According to Wylie (1989), reliability of the ten-item scores on seven other studies showed alpha coefficients ranging from .72 to .87. A test-retest with a two-week interval showed a coefficient of .85 while another with a seven-month interval had a coefficient of .63.

Wylie (1989) reports substantial support for the construct validity of the instrument. She notes that construction of the scale avoided item ambiguity, a forced choice format, and ipsative scoring. In addition, not using

two-part indices which would produce discrepancy scores reflects the assumption that each respondent would take any discrepancies, such as between their perception of self versus some idealized perception, into account in responding to each item. It is also suggested that the likelihood of scores representing an acquiescent response set is reduced by wording half of the items positively and half negatively. By using anonymously completed questionnaires, it is expected that there is no need to take further precautions for reducing the possibility that responses may be false, based on the desire to respond in accordance with perceived social desirability.

However, noting that scores tend to be quite skewed toward the numerical center of the scale, other factors may be interfering with accurately measuring low self-esteem. These could include differences in reading ability, a lack of cooperation in completing the questionnaire, differing cultural backgrounds, or other unrelated variable. She suggests that great care is needed in interpreting differences in scores obtained from groups with different abilities, reading levels, ethnicities or socioeconomic statuses.

Discussing eight factor analyses involving studies using large samples of differing ages and genders, she reports that two obtained one-factor solutions demonstrating unidimensionality. Several of the others which obtained two-factor solutions nevertheless represented unidimensionality

either because the two factors represented a type of response set associated with the same construct or because correlations between the two factors and other variables showed substantial correlations. Overall, most of the various researchers agree that the scale does measure a single self-attitude.

The demographic form is a brief survey written by the principal researcher to determine the participant's ethnicity, country of birth, age at which he or she moved to the U.S. if born in another country, sex, and locale in which the subject has lived most of the time since arriving in the U.S. or since birth. There are also a series of questions relating to the participant's generational status. They ask about the country of birth of the participant as well as of each parent and each grandparent. Thus, a person's generational status could be identified as first, second, third, fourth or later generation, or as mixed, wherein a persons parents are of different generational statuses.

· Data Analysis

When all questionnaires had been scored, the resultant information for each participant was ranked. For the self-esteem scores, rankings started with the highest obtained values. Ranking the results of the life style inventory was somewhat more involved in that the end results of scoring them are not numerical values. However, an intermediate step in

determining which descriptor would apply in each case does produce figures representing proportions of responses counted in each category of acculturation tendency.

Therefore, in order to establish a rank order, it was necessary to assign a numeric value to each category of identified dominant acculturation tendency. Somewhat arbitrarily, a value of 1.00 was assigned to the cultural resistance tendency. A value of 2.00 was assigned to cultural shift, cultural incorporation was assigned a value of 3.00 and a value of 4.00 was given to those whose scores indicated a nondominant pattern of responses. Then the proportion figure obtained for the dominant tendency was added to the appropriate integer. In the case of nondominance, the average of the two highest proportions was calculated and that figure was added to 4.00.

Once the two sets of scores were ranked, it was possible to calculate the Spearman correlation value to determine if there was any significant degree of correlation. Use of the Spearman correlation, rather than the Pearson, was necessitated by the relatively limited number of pairs (N = 18) as well as the restricted range of obtained self-esteem scores (Gravetter & Wallnau, 1988).

Assumptions and Limitations

For this study it was assumed that:

(1)   each respondent could read and understand the instruments;

(2)   each would believe in the anonymity of his/her responses and answer honestly;

(3)   there would be a degree of homogeneity relating to socioeconomic status in that while the participants' families of origin may differ, all possess similar aspirations for occupational and economic success as represented by attending a university;

(4)   scores obtained on a widely-used measure of global self-esteem do indicate how readily a person has adjusted to their life situation or how successfully they will be able to adjust to changes in their life.

A major limitation involves the fact that self-esteem can rise or fall in response to other variables than the type of acculturation.   Another is the possibility that by using college students for the study there may be insufficient heterogeneity within the population to provide sufficient variability for interpretation. Also, using the procedure of mailing questionnaires to potential participants, it was decided that including too many instruments, or instruments which would take more time to complete would be too discouraging and result in fewer responses.

Summary

This chapter described the sample population and how it was obtained. It also presented specific information about the instruments used in the study and discussed the reliability and validity of the two principal instruments. It then provided a description of the procedures which were followed to obtain and analyze the data. It also noted certain assumptions and limitations inherent in the methodology.

Chapter 4

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study sought to compare patterns of acculturation to self-esteem scores among a group of Mexican American college students in an effort to identify whether one particular pattern of acculturation was linked to a more successful adjustment as indicated by self-esteem scores. This chapter will examine and discuss the findings yielded by the obtained data.

Findings·

A total of 24 persons responded to the mailing by returning completed questionnaires. Eighteen proved to be Mexican American students. The data obtained from these participants has been arranged in Table 1 and Table 2, which both show the results of the three questionnaires ranked by the self-esteem scores.

They were determined to be Mexican Americans by having described themselves as such, or using terms such as Mexican, Chicano, or Hispanic where one or more parent or grandparent was born in Mexico. In terms of their demographic information they included the following: ten were female and eight were male. There were four persons whose responses indicated they were first generation Mexican Americans. Two individuals indicated a status of second generation, two indicated a

third generation status, and there was one person whose status is fourth generation or later. Nine respondents appear to have a mixed generational status in that each parent has a differing generational status.

Of the 18 respondents, 10 persons have resided primarily in Tucson while three reported having lived most of their lives in Southern Arizona. Four have lived mostly in Phoenix and one person's period of U.S. residency was spent primarily in Texas. Fourteen individuals were born in the United States; the remaining four were born in Mexico. Of those four, one came to live in the U.S. at age three, one at age 10, one at age 19, and one at age 20.

The scores on the Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale ranged from 29 to 40. The mean was 36.4 and the standard deviation was 3.6. The cultural life style results included 10 individuals whose dominant tendency was cultural shift (CS), five who were nondominant, two whose dominant tendency was cultural resistance (CR), and one demonstrated cultural incorporation (CI). The two sets of scores, converted to rankings, are plotted as a scatter graph in Table 3.

The Spearman correlation, at -.36, is not high enough to establish critical significance. Therefore, it was not possible to reject the null hypothesis that no meaningful correlation exists. The first research question is thus answered in the negative. Further, it was not possible to

support the original hypotheses of this study, namely that high self-esteem would correlate positively with the cultural incorporation tendency and that low self-esteem would correlate positively with cultural shift. However, it would appear that research question #2 also has been answered generally in the negative. All but one showed different tendencies in one or more dimension than was reflected in their dominant tendency. Only one participant, #070, showed the same tendency in each dimension as was reflected in the dominant tendency.

Discussion

In general, the typical respondent is a Mexican American who has resided primarily in the Tucson area. Born in the United States, this individual's parents are of different generational statuses. Additionally, this person is likely to have scored at or near the top of the self-esteem scale.

Although there is no significant correlation between the self-esteem scores and acculturation tendencies, a majority of those individuals, 78%, with self-esteem scores above the mean demonstrated a dominant tendency of cultural shift. Of the other two, or 22%, one demonstrated a dominant tendency of cultural incorporation and the other was nondominant. Among those who scored below the mean, only 33% had a dominant tendency of cultural shift. 44% of those below the mean were

assessed as nondominant and 22% had a dominant tendency of cultural resistance.

As was noted above, all but one of the respondents showed various tendencies across the five dimensions which differed from their dominant tendency. However, that sole exception is a native of Mexico who did not come to the U.S. until age 20. While there was one other person who also was born in Mexico and came to this country at an older age, i.e., 19, that individual reported that her mother and her mother's parents were born in the U.S. Also, while her father and his father were born in Mexico, his mother was born in the U.S. In addition, she was the only respondent whose dominant tendency was cultural incorporation.

There do appear to be several patterns among the tendencies demonstrated across the five dimensions. 78% of all the subjects demonstrated a tendency toward cultural shift for the first dimension, the Intra-family Language Factor, as well as the second dimension, the Extra-family Language Factor. Also, for the fourth dimension, the Cultural Familiarity and Activities Factor, and fifth dimension, which is the factor of Cultural Identification and Pride, there were very few cultural shift tendencies clearly indicated. Only one individual responded to the questions comprising the fourth dimension in a primarily cultural shift fashion. For the fifth factor, only two persons were clearly reflecting a

cultural shift tendency.

As for the third dimension, the Social Affiliation and Activities factor, only two of those who scored above the mean on self-esteem reflected a clear tendency toward cultural resistance. Among those who scored below the mean, there were only two whose tendency was cultural shift. Overall, however, only five, or 28%, indicated a cultural shift tendency for this dimension.

Summary

This chapter presented the findings of the study in terms of both the demographic information obtained as well as the analysis of the data contained in the results of the two questionnaires which participants completed. It also discussed the results as they related to the original hypotheses and research questions for the study. Research question #1 was answered in the negative and neither hypothesis was supported. However, the negative answer for research question #2 suggests interesting implications which are discussed in Chapter 5.

Table 1. Demographic Information, Self-esteem, and Acculturation Tendencies

Subj. #	Sex	Country of birth	Residence	Generation	Self-Esteem	Acculturation tendency
085	F	Mexico[a]	Tucson	1st	40	CI
025	F	U.S.	Southern AZ	2nd	40	CS
028	F	U.S.	Phoenix	2nd	40	Nondominant
038	F	U.S.	Tucson	Mixed	40	CS
041	M	U.S	Tucson	Mixed	40	CS
072	M	U.S.	Southern AZ	Mixed	40	CS
094	M	U.S.	Phoenix	Mixed	39	CS
023	M	U.S.	Tucson	Mixed	39	CS
077	M	Mexico[b]	Phoenix	1st	37	CS
005	F	U.S.	Tucson	3rd	36	Nondominant
031	M	U.S.	Tucson	3rd	35	Nondominant
002	F	U.S.	Phoenix	4th or later	35	CS
009	F	U.S.	Tucson	Mixed	34	CS
088	M	U.S.	Tucson	Mixed	34	CR

Table 1 -- *Continued*.

Subj. #	Sex	Country of birth	Residence	Generation	Self-Esteem	Acculturation tendency
087	F	U.S.	Southern AZ	Mixed	34	CS
003	F	U.S.	Tucson	Mixed	33	Nondominant
070	M	Mexico[c]	Tucson	1st	30	CR
089	F	Mexico[d]	Texas	1st	29	Nondominant

[a] Moved to U.S. at age 19.
[b] Moved to U.S. at age 10.
[c] Moved to U.S. at age 20.
[d] Moved to U.S. at age 3.

Table 2. Comparison of Dominant Tendency and Tendencies in the Five Dimensions
==

Subj.	Self-esteem	Dominant tendency	Dimension				
			1[a]	2[b]	3[c]	4[d]	5[e]
085	40	CI	CI	CI	CR	CI	CR
025	40	CS	CS	CS	CR/CI	CI	CS
028	40	Nondominant	CR	CI	CS/CI	CI	CR
038	40	CS	CS	CS	CS	CI	CI
041	40	CS	CS	CS	CR/CI	CR/CI	CR
072	40	CS	CS	CS	CI	CS	CS
094	39	CS	CS	CS	CR	CI	CR
023	39	CS	CS	CS	CS	CS/CI	CS/CR/CI
077	37	CS	CR	CS	CS	CI	CI
005	36	Nondominant	CS	CS	CR	CR/CS	CR
031	35	Nondominant	CS	CS	CR	CR/CI	CR
002	35	CS	CS	CS	CS	CI	CI
009	34	CS	CS	CS	CI	CI	CI
088	34	CR	CS	CI	CR	CR	CR

Table 2 -- *Continued.*

Subj.	Self-esteem	Dominant tendency	Dimension				
			1[a]	2[b]	3[c]	4[d]	5[e]
087	34	CS	CS	CS	CS	CS/CI	CI
003	33	Nondominant	CS	CS	CI	CI	CI
070	30	CR	CR	CR	CR	CR	CR
089	29	Nondominant	CS	CS	CR/CI	CI	CR

NOTE: Where two or three tendencies are listed, the subject answered an equal number of questions associated with that dimension in the fashions indicated.
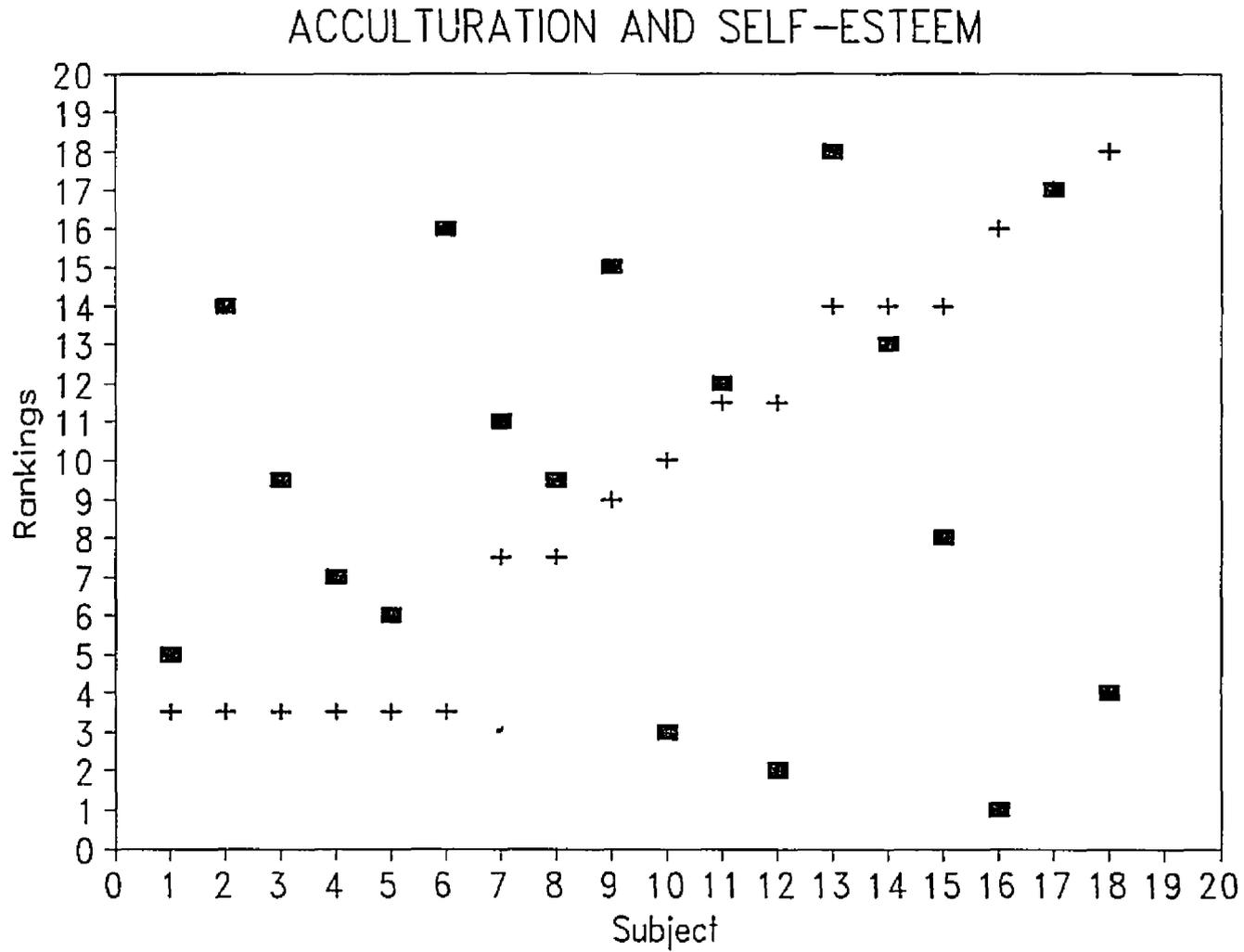[a] Intra-family language factor
[b] Extra-family language factor
[c] Social affiliation and activities factor
[d] Cultural familiarity and activities factor
[e] Cultural Identification and pride factor

Table 3. Scatter Graph Showing Self-esteem and Acculturation Rankings

ACCULTURATION AND SELF-ESTEEM

+ = Self-esteem; ■ = Acculturation

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study sought to compare patterns of acculturation to self-esteem scores among a group of Mexican American college students in an effort to identify whether one particular pattern of acculturation was linked to a more successful adjustment as indicated by self-esteem scores. This chapter will discuss conclusions and recommendations both for future research as well as for practitioners

Conclusions

At first glance, a researcher might be expected to experience at least a slight pang of disappointment to discover that the results of a study failed to provide support for the study's hypothesEs. However, in the case of this study the final results of the data analysis are not so clearly delineated as to warrant even a minimal disappointment. Specifically, it appears that the results provide very interesting pictures of an ethnic group which hitherto has been portrayed in somewhat discouraging lights.

The first pattern which presents itself is the overall high scores obtained on the self-esteem scale. It appearing that the mean for this population lies less than four points from the top of the scale, it would be difficult to assess a negative impact on the respondents' self-concept due to

membership in a minority ethnic group. While it is possible that by virtue of their enrollment in programs of higher education this group may have a more positive self-esteem than their peers who have not been afforded a similar opportunity, it is still interesting to note such a consistent positive outcome. One wonders what the results would be if the scale were administered to a larger, more ethnically mixed group of students within the same institution.

Another outcome of the study which is interestingly, and possibly encouragingly revealing is that, while the majority of participants demonstrated a dominant acculturation tendency, which in the case of 10 out of 13 was the cultural shift tendency, all except one demonstrated varying tendencies across the five dimensions of acculturation as identified by Mendoza (1989). Thus while it may be argued that a predominant tendency toward cultural shift, especially as it relates to the language factors, is helpful in order to facilitate full functioning within the mainstream society, full assimilation is not necessary to produce individuals who are comfortable with themselves, as suggested by the limited number of cultural shift tendencies noted in each of the other three dimensions.

One wonders, in fact, whether a person from an ethnic minority could be substantially comfortable with himself or herself if he or she did strive for greater assimilation. One

of the difficulties associated with minority membership is the discrimination practiced against the groups members by the mainstream population. Perhaps it is necessary for those persons to acquire a sense of value specifically derived from that very membership in a minority group, as suggested by Crocker & Major (1989).

Another question raised in the data relates to the assessed tendencies for the Social Affiliation and Activities Factor. Those with self-esteem scores below the mean tend to reflect somewhat less comfort about interacting with non-Mexican Americans than among those whose scores were higher. Although there is not a substantially delineated difference, it would seem that there is a suggestion that a strong identification with the traditional culture as measured in the fourth and fifth dimensions coupled with a greater ease in relating socially with members of the mainstream culture may be associated with a greater sense of self-worth.

Recommendations

The first recommendation for possible future research would involve using a larger sample population, and preferably one which draws on a sample with more varied life circumstances. A readily apparent second recommendation is that other avenues for measuring adjustment could be helpfully used. While there is no reason to doubt the accuracy with

which the self-esteem scores reflect the participants' evaluative attitude toward themselves, the lack of a broader range of scores, as well as the relationship between self-esteem and other factors such as family atmosphere and child-rearing practices suggest that it might be more informative to use several different approaches to measuring adjustment, such as the Tennessee Self-Concept Inventory, the Minnesota Multiphasic Psychological Inventory, and some instrument designed to elicit responses about a person's level of satisfaction in different facets of personal and social behavior.

Another possibility for further study is suggested by the fact that Mendoza's Cultural Life Style Inventory used in this study is an early version. A revised version could be useful, especially if it provides a method for producing a more quantified picture of acculturation profiles. That is, additional work might be able to establish reliable and valid data relating to *how much* a person displays various tendencies, as well as the directions those tendencies take.

For counselors, there is a clear implication that when working with Mexican American clients, there should at least be a recognition of the importance of a bicultural approach to acculturation. While this study does not establish a clear relationship between high self-esteem and multi-tendency patterns of acculturation, it certainly supports the

possibility that such a pattern might tend to be the one more commonly found in this population and, as such, needs to be accepted. Efforts with Mexican American clients which disregard such factors could prove to be counterproductive. Indeed, it could prove to be appropriate to encourage a client to become more familiar with the traditional culture if he or she demonstrates too strongly a tendency toward cultural shift.

Summary

This chapter discusses conclusions and recommendations for both future research as well as for cross-cultural counselors who work with Mexican American clients. It notes that there is a strong indication that this population does not acculturate in an exclusively assimilationistic fashion and that perhaps such would be of little value.

APPENDIX A

HUMAN SUBJECTS COMMITTEE LETTER

THE UNIVERSITY OF
ARIZONA
HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER

March 24, 1994

Robert A. Henley, BA
c/o Oscar Christensen, Ph.D.
Department of Counseling/Guidance
Esquire Apartments
1230 N. Park Ave., Suite 210
Campus Mail

RE: ACCULTURATION AND SELF-ESTEEM AMONG MEXICAN AMERICAN COLLEGE
STUDENTS

Dear Mr. Henley:

We have received documents concerning your above cited project.
Regulations published by the U.S. Department of Health and Human
Services [45 CFR Part 46.101(b) (2)] exempt this type of research
from review by our Committee.

Thank you for informing us of your work. If you have any questions
concerning the above, please contact this office.

Sincerely yours,
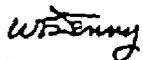
William F. Denny, M.D.
Chairman
Human Subjects Committee

WFD:js

cc: Departmental/College Review Committee

APPENDIX B

COVER LETTER, INFORMATION SHEET, AND STATEMENT OF
UNDERSTANDING

Assistant Dean for Hispanic Student Affairs and
Chicano/Hispanic Student Resource Center

THE UNIVERSITY OF
ARIZONA
TUCSON ARIZONA

79
Bear Down Gym 103
Tucson, Arizona 85721
(602) 621-5627

March 11, 1994

Dear Student:

My office is conducting a survey of Hispano students on campus with the objective of obtaining good and current information regarding issues of importance to you and to my office as well as to the institution. The enclosed *Hispano Student Survey Question-Answer Sheet* provides more detailed information about the survey, its purposes, and its potential uses. Please read it carefully.

Using a random-number table, we selected a random sample of students from the population who checked off the *Hispanic* ethnic code in their applications. In this process your name was selected. I sincerely hope that you will decide to participate in this important study, which is the first of its kind to be done here at the University of Arizona.

The survey is in three parts. The first part is a series of three (3) questionnaires, which you fill out and mail back along with the enclosed CONSENT FORM. These are enclosed with this letter. The second part is a demographic-profile questionnaire that will be mailed to you in the near future. The third part ·is an interview with a member of our survey team. When you come to the interview, please bring the completed second part (the demographic questionnaire). A member of my staff or of the survey team will contact you soon to arrange the interview, or, if you want, you can come to my office (Bear Down Gym, Room 103--621-5627) to schedule your interview.

Please feel free to contact my office should you need or desire more information. Hoping that you will assist us in generating accurate and good information about our student population, I remain,

Sincerely Yours,

Salomón R. Baldenegro, M.Ed., M.A.
Assistant Dean
Chicano/Hispano Student Affairs

Hispano Student Survey Question-Answer Sheet

Q. *Who is sponsoring this survey?*
A. The office of UA Chicano/Hispano Student Affairs.

Q. *What is the purpose of the survey?*
A. The major purpose is to obtain solid and good information regarding Hispano students at the U of A.

Q. *Why is obtaining good and solid information regarding Hispano students important?*
A. The number of Hispano students attending the UA has increased dramatically in the course of the past 15-20 years (from hundreds of students in the 1970's to thousands of students in the 1990's). In order to continue to be effective in attracting Hispano students to the UA--and keeping them here until graduation--it is important to know as much as possible about the dynamics that affect our students. An equally important reason is to help dispel any misconceptions about Hispano students that may exist. These misconceptions can best be neutralized by valid, contemporary information gleaned directly from students.

Q. *Will my responses be confidential?*
A. Yes. Apart from our ethical responsibility to you, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 prohibits us from disclosing personal or academic information about students. The information obtained will be used in aggregate, statistical form only. Certain quotes may be used in the final report, but these will be anonymous--i.e., the person being quoted will not be identified.

Q. *How will the information obtained in the survey be used?*
A. The information will be used in several ways. The principal ones are:

1. The office of Chicano/Hispano Student Affairs and its personnel will use the information to plan and prioritize its activities so as to address as best as possible the major issues that emerge from the study.

2. The information from the study will be shared with other UA units and personnel who work extensively with Hispano students. This will help them address the needs of our students.

3. The information will help the Assistant Dean for Chicano/Hispano Student Affairs and other administrators be able to better represent the interests of Hispano students when they interact with UA administrators and other decision makers.

4. The information will be shared with key offices and people who can benefit from knowing who our students are, what

interests and affects them, etc. These offices and people
include the members of the Board of Regents, the President
of the university, the Provost and Vice Presidents, Deans,
Heads of departments, and others.

5. In the interests of full disclosure, you should know that
a portion of the study will be used by a graduate student
for his Master's Thesis. The comments made previously
regarding the confidentiality of the results will be
adhered to by the graduate student.

Q. *Will the completed report be available to me?*
A. Yes. When the report is completed, you can request a copy of
it. Also, copies for review will be available at the UA Main
Library, the Office of Chicano/Hispano Student Affairs and
other locations on campus (e.g., the Minority Retention
Services Office, the New Start/Summer Bridge Office, etc.).

Q. *Who will actually interview me?*
A. One of the members of the study team (see Steering Committee
list). Each member of the team has been fully briefed on the
purpose and content of the study and has been trained in the
interview format that will be used.

Hispano Student Survey--1993

UNDERSTANDING AND CONSENT FORM

1. I have read the **Question-Answer Sheet** and understand the purpose(s) of the Hispano Student Survey sponsored by the Assistant Dean for Chicano/Hispano Student Affairs.

2. I agree to participate in the Hispano Student Survey by filling out the questionnaires mailed to me and by being interviewed by a member of the survey team.

3. I understand that my responses will be confidential and will be used in aggregate, statistical form only. I give my consent to the author of the final report to quote my comments on condition that such quote(s) be anonymous, that is, that I not be identified as the generator of the quote(s).

_____

Signature of Student

_____

Printed name of student

_____

Date

APPENDIX C

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE
AND
ROSENBERG SELF-ESTEEM SCALE

Please complete the following survey. It is intended to provide data which will be useful in understanding how members of other cultures adjust in the American society. Part I covers information about your ethnic background; Part II deals with your overall attitude about yourself; Part III asks about your cultural life style.

Your participation in this study is <u>voluntary</u> and <u>anonymous</u>. You do not have to fill out the survey. Also, please do not put you name on any of the sheets. It is understood that by returning the completed survey you give your consent to participate in the study.

Your willingness to participate is greatly appreciated.

==

PART I

What is your ethnic heritage? _____

Are you: Female _____   Male _____

Were you born in the United States?   Yes _____   No _____

If "No", in what country were you born? _____

At what age did you move to the United States? _____

Where in the United States have you lived the longest?
_____ Tucson   _____ Southern Arizona
_____ Border region in another state
_____ Other: _____

FATHER

Was your father born in the United States?   Yes _____   No _____

If "No", in what country was he born?   _____

Was his father born in the United States?   Yes _____   No _____

If "No", in what country was he born?   _____

Was his mother born in the United States?   Yes _____   No _____

If "No", in what country was she born?   _____

MOTHER

Was your mother born in the United States?   Yes _____   No _____

If "No", in what country was she born?   _____

Was her father born in the United States?   Yes _____   No _____

If "No", in what country was he born?   _____

Was her mother born in the United States?   Yes _____   No _____

If "No", in what country was she born?   _____

<u>PART II</u>

SELF ATTITUDE QUESTIONNAIRE

Please indicate whether you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree with each of the following items:

1.   I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.

STRONGLY AGREE ____   AGREE ____   DISAGREE ____   STRONGLY DISAGREE ____

2.   I feel that I have a number of good qualities.

STRONGLY AGREE ____   AGREE ____   DISAGREE ____   STRONGLY DISAGREE ____

3.   All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.

STRONGLY AGREE ____   AGREE ____   DISAGREE ____   STRONGLY DISAGREE ____

4.   I am able to do things as well as most other people.

STRONGLY AGREE ____   AGREE ____   DISAGREE ____   STRONGLY DISAGREE ____

5.   I feel I do not have much to be proud of.

STRONGLY AGREE ____   AGREE ____   DISAGREE ____   STRONGLY DISAGREE ____

6.   I take a positive attitude toward myself.

STRONGLY AGREE ____   AGREE ____   DISAGREE ____   STRONGLY DISAGREE ____

7.   On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.

STRONGLY AGREE ____   AGREE ____   DISAGREE ____   STRONGLY DISAGREE ____

8.   I wish I could have more respect for myself.

STRONGLY AGREE ____   AGREE ____   DISAGREE ____   STRONGLY DISAGREE ____

9.   I certainly feel useless at times.

STRONGLY AGREE ____   AGREE ____   DISAGREE ____   STRONGLY DISAGREE ____

10. At times I think I am no good at all.

STRONGLY AGREE ____   AGREE ____   DISAGREE ____   STRONGLY DISAGREE ____

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