Article

Conflicting Cultural Pressures and the Adjustment of Latino College Students

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Abstract

The risk and protective variables for Latino students' experience of depression, college adjustment, and drop-out intentions were examined. Perceived bicultural competence emerged as a protective factor, and cultural incongruity, negative perceptions of the university environment, and intragroup marginalization emerged as risk factors associated with these psychological and academic outcomes. Multiple regressions revealed cultural incongruity predicted depression and college adjustment, and bicultural competence predicted college adjustment and drop-out intentions when other variables were controlled.

Resumen

Variables de riesgo y protectoras de las experiencias de estudiantes latinos de depresión, ajuste universitario, e intenciones de salirse de la universidad se examinaron. Competencia bicultural percibida emergió como factor protector; e incongruencia cultural, percepciones negativas del ambiente universitario, y marginalización intragrupal emergieron como factores asociados con riesgo de esos resultados académicos y psicológicos. Al controlar otras variables, regresiones múltiples revelaron que la incongruencia cultural predice depresión y ajuste universitario, y que la competencia bicultural predice ajuste universitario e intenciones de salirse de la universidad ó darse de baja.

Keywords

Latino students, dropout, depression, cultural incongruity, bicultural competence

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Introduction

Latino students' enrollment in undergraduate programs more than doubled in the past 14 years, increasing from 1.4 million in 2000 to 3 million in 2014 (Kena et al., 2016). Yet, the education gap among Whites' and Latinos' degree attainment has widened. The disparity has grown from 20 percentage points to 27 percentage points between 1995 and 2015 (Kena et al., 2016). Academic institutions must ascertain why they are failing to retain Latino college students who aspire to complete their education.

Previous research has pointed to intragroup marginalization, cultural incongruity, and negative perceptions of the university environment as potential risk factors associated with poor academic and psychological outcomes among Latino college students (Cano, Castillo, Castro, Dios, & Roncancio, 2013; Cerezo & Chang, 2013; Gloria, Castellanos, & Orozco, 2005; Gloria, Castellanos, Scull and Villegas, 2009; Llamas & Ramos-Sánchez, 2013). These factors are embedded within the cultural double-bind that Latino college students often find themselves while negotiating conflicting cultural pressures from their academic institutions and their families. Researchers have suggested that Latino students frequently face pressure to adopt aspects of White American culture to create a better fit with their academic institutions (Cano et al., 2013; Gloria & Robinson Kurpius, 1996). However, Latino college students' adoption of White American cultural norms may trigger intragroup marginalization by family members (Castillo, Conoley, Brossart, & Quiros, 2007). Latino students educated in predominantly White institutions throughout their educational careers may have long-standing experiences of intragroup marginalization and cultural incongruity, whereas these experiences may become more salient for Latino students entering predominantly White institutions for the first time in college. Recent research has also suggested that perceived bicultural competence, or the ability to shift flexibly between cultural identities depending on situational demands, serves as a protective factor among Latino college students (Carrera & Wei, 2014; Wei et al., 2010). As such, this study examined the relationship of intragroup marginalization, cultural incongruity, perceptions of the university environment, and perceived bicultural competence with Latino college students' experiences of depression, college adjustment, and drop-out intentions.

Intragroup Marginalization

Intragroup marginalization occurs when interpersonal distance arises between Latino college students and their family because they are displaying behaviors, values, and beliefs that their family members view as divergent from group norms within their heritage (Castillo et al., 2007). Researchers have argued that some Latino college students become motivated to adopt aspects of White dominant culture to enhance their cultural congruity within their academic institutions, but this may strain their relationships with family members (Cano et al., 2013).

Castillo et al. (2007) argued that some Latinos may perceive acculturating individuals' adoption of dominant White cultural values and behaviors as threatening to the

distinctiveness of the Latino ethnic group and impose social sanctions in response to their deviation from heritage norms (Castillo, Cano, Chen, Blucker, & Olds, 2008). The social sanctions of intragroup marginalization manifest in teasing and criticism. For example, Latino family members or friends may accuse Latino college students of "being brown on the outside, but white on the inside," questioning the credibility of the acculturating individual's Latino identity despite their Latino heritage (Castillo et al., 2008).

University Environment and Cultural Incongruity

Cultural incongruity refers to a lack of fit between students' culture and the beliefs, values, and behaviors sanctioned by their academic institution (Gloria & Robinson Kurpius, 1996). Colleges often remain unwelcoming toward minority students, resulting in negative perceptions of the university environment and feelings of not belonging (Gloria & Robinson Kurpius, 1996; Ramirez, 2014; Sólorzano, Villalpando, & Oseguera, 2005). Latino college students often deal with hostile racial climates, facing prejudice and discrimination on college campuses (Ramirez, 2014; Sólorzano et al., 2005). Latino college students often endure microaggressions or subtle, brief environmental slights that are commonplace and communicate hostility toward people of color (Franklin, Smith, & Hung, 2014; Ramirez, 2014). Due to the presence of discrimination and cultural dissonance, university environments often implicitly pressure Latino college students either to conform to White American cultural norms or to conceal their cultural identity (Cano et al., 2013; Gloria & Robinson Kurpius, 1996).

Perceived Bicultural Competence

LaFromboise, Coleman, and Gerton (1993) promoted an alternation model of cultural aquisition, which posits that relationships can simultaneously exist between individuals' heritage culture and their second culture. This model allows individuals to maintain positive relationships with two cultures, in which they view each as equal in status regardless of the degree they personally prefer or value them. Individuals assuming an alternation approach can foster a sense of belonging to both cultures without conceding their sense of cultural identity by flexibly shifting between them depending on situational demands. These bicultural skills include (a) having a well-developed knowledge base of both cultures, (b) maintaining positive attitudes toward each culture, (c) developing a sense of bicultural efficacy or confidence in one's ability to navigate two cultures, (d) building strong communication skills within each group, (e) fostering a flexible role repertoire within each culture to facilitate socially appropriate behavior, and (f) creating a sense of groundedness or belongingness to support networks within both cultures. LaFromboise et al. argued that the alternation model emphasizes individuals' agency in choosing how they will interact with their heritage culture and dominant culture. David, Okazaki, and Saw (2009) found that college students with higher scores in perceived bicultural competence experienced greater psychological well-being and mental health than those with lower scores in perceived

bicultural competence. Therefore, bicultural competence might serve as a protective factor associated with positive psychological and educational outcomes among Latino college students (Cano et al., 2013; Wei et al., 2010).

The Current Study

The current study aimed to extend previous research by examining how Latino college students' experiences of the university environment, cultural incongruity, intragroup marginalization, and perceived bicultural competence relate to their experiences of depression, drop-out intentions, and college adjustment. First, we examined how intragroup marginalization by family members is associated with these psychological and educational outcomes. Previous studies have discovered a relationship between intragroup marginalization and depressive symptoms among Latino college students (Cano et al., 2013). The current study extends previous research by examining how experiences of intragroup marginalization relate to drop-out intentions and college adjustment. Researchers have previously linked intragroup marginalization by family to emotional adjustment to college (Llamas & Morgan Consoli, 2012). In addition, previous research has established a relationship between intragroup marginalization by peers and academic adjustment (Llamas & Ramos-Sánchez, 2013). The current study builds on this by examining the relationship between intragroup marginalization by family and both academic and emotional adjustment.

Second, we examined how perceptions of the university environment and cultural incongruity relate to Latino college students' symptoms of depression, college adjustment, and drop-out intentions. Researchers have studied how perceptions of the university environment and cultural congruity relate to Latino college students' psychological well-being, GPA, barriers to academic success, and persistence attitudes (Cerezo & Chang, 2013; Edman & Brazil, 2009; Gloria et al., 2005; Gloria et al., 2009; Gloria & Robinson Kurpius, 1996). The current study extends previous research by examining how cultural congruity and students' perceptions of the university environment are associated with students' emotional adjustment and academic adjustment to college. Notably, no study to date has examined how perceptions of the university environment relate to symptoms of depression among Latino college students. Third, we investigated the association of perceived bicultural competence with symptoms of depression, college adjustment, and drop-out intentions among Latino college students. Researchers at other universities in the Midwest have found that Latino college students with a higher degree of perceived bicultural competence experience fewer depressive symptoms and greater psychological well-being (Carrera & Wei, 2014; David et al., 2009; Wei et al., 2010). Depression among college students has been linked to poorer college adjustment and persistence (Hysenbegasi, Hass, & Rowland, 2005; Wintre & Bowers, 2007). Therefore, perceived bicultural competence among Latino college students may also relate to educational outcomes, but little research to date has examined how it connects with Latino college students' academic and personal well-being.

Finally, we advance research in this area by using a multivariate framework to examine the cumulative association of intragroup marginalization, university environment, cultural incongruity, and bicultural competence on these psychological and educational outcomes.

Method

Procedure

We recruited college students as participants via classroom visits and email outreach from an undergraduate participant pool at a medium-sized, urban university during Fall 2015 and Spring 2016. Students completed all questionnaires online and their participation was anonymous. Consent was obtained from all participants prior to completing the survey.

Participants

The final sample for this study consisted of 117 Latino undergraduate students at a diverse (45% White, 18% Latino, 19% African American, 7% Asian), urban, Midwestern, private, 4-year university who ranged in age from 18 to 55 years (M = 22.82 years, SD = 5.47). All students indicated that they were of Latina/o or Hispanic heritage and 33% identified as multiethnic. Forty-five percent of these Latino students further identified their specific nationality of origin, most commonly Mexican/ Mexican American (n = 40) and Puerto Rican (n = 7) in addition to six other countries. Overall, 75% of the participants identified as female, 23% identified as male, and 2% identified as transgender. Fifteen percent were first-year students, 20% were sophomores, 28% were juniors, and 37% were seniors. Participants identified as first generation immigrants (11%), second generation immigrants (51%), third generation immigrants (17%), foreign nationals (2%), and "none of the above" (19%). Participants were enrolled as full-time (87%) and part-time (13%) students. A majority were employed, with 26% working full-time, 53% working part-time, and 21% not working.

Measures

Intragroup marginalization. The Intragroup Marginalization Inventory (IMI; Castillo et al., 2007) measures perceived intragroup marginalization among racial/ethnic minority college students. The current study utilized only the IMI-Family scale, which includes 12 self-report items that examine the extent of interpersonal distancing that individuals perceive to be exhibited by their family. Internal reliability estimates for the IMI-Family have ranged from .81 to .87 among Latino samples (Castillo et al., 2008; Llamas & Morgan Consoli, 2012). Participants rated items such as, "Family members tell me that I have too many White friends" and "My family members tell me that I 'act White'" on a 7-point scale. Higher scores indicate greater

perceived experiences of intragroup marginalization. The coefficient alpha of the IMI-F in the current study was .81.

Cultural incongruity. The Cultural Congruity Scale (CCS; Gloria & Robinson Kurpius, 1996) examines the perceived lack of fit between Latino college students' personal and cultural values and those of their academic institution. The CCS consists of 13 items (e.g., "I feel that I have to change myself to fit into school"). Gloria and Robinson Kurpius (1996) tested the measure's predictive validity, finding that students' endorsement of experiencing better fit with their institution related to more positive persistence decisions among Latino college students. Internal reliability estimates for the CCS have ranged from .85 to .89 among samples of Latino college students (Gloria et al., 2009; Gloria & Robinson Kurpius, 1996). Participants rated items on a 7-point scale. Higher scores reflect greater experiences of incongruity. The coefficient alpha of the CCS was .81 in the current study.

University environment. The University Environment Scale assesses Latino college students' perceptions of the supportiveness of their university environment (UES; Gloria & Robinson Kurpius, 1996). The UES comprised 14 items, such as "University staff have been warm and friendly" and "The university seems to value minority students." Gloria and Robinson Kurpius (1996) examined the measure's predictive validity and found that Latino college students who endorsed more favorable ratings of their university environment were more likely to report positive persistence decisions. Internal reliability estimates that the UES have ranged from .75 to .80 among samples of Latino college students (Gloria et al., 2005; Gloria et al., 2009). Participants rated items on a 7-point scale. Higher scores indicate more positive perceptions of the university environment. The coefficient alpha of the UES was .87 in the current study.

Perceived bicultural competence. The Bicultural Self-Efficacy Scale (BSES; David et al., 2009) consists of 26 items designed to examine ethnic minority undergraduate students' perceived bicultural competence in both mainstream culture and their heritage culture. Reported alpha coefficients for the BSES have ranged from .92 to .94 (David et al., 2009; Wei et al., 2010). Carrera and Wei (2014) reported an alpha coefficient of .94 for the BSES among a population of Latino college students. Participants rated their degree of agreement to items such as, "I have strong ties with mainstream Americans as well as people from the same heritage culture as myself" on a 9-point scale. Higher scores indicate higher levels of perceived bicultural competence. The coefficient alpha of the BSES was .94 in the current study.

Depression. A shortened version of the Center for Epidemiological Studies–Depression Scale (CES-D; Radloff, 1977) was utilized to measure depression. The CES-D-Short is an 11-item scale (CES-D-Short; Kohout, Berkman, Evans, Cornoni-Huntley, 1993), which assesses how often individuals experienced depressive symptoms over the past week. Participants rate items such as, "I felt that everything I did was an effort" on a 3-point scale. Higher total scores indicate a higher

level of depressive symptoms. The coefficient alpha of the CES-D-Short was .79 in the current study.

College adjustment. The Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (SACQ; Baker & Siryk, 1989) consists of four subscales; the Academic Adjustment and Personal-Emotional Adjustment subscales were used for the current study. The Personal-Emotional subscale contains 15 items measuring the extent of psychological distress students' experience in the context of their college adjustment process, such as "I'm experiencing a lot of difficulty coping with the stresses imposed upon me in college." The Academic Adjustment subscale encompasses 24 items that examine students' success in dealing with the educational demands of college. Researchers using the SACQ with Latino college students reported internal consistency estimates of .87 for the Academic Adjustment subscale and .79 for the Personal-Emotional Adjustment scale (Llamas & Morgan Consoli, 2012; Llamas & Ramos-Sánchez, 2013). Participants rated their experiences on a 9-point scale. All item scores from these two subscales were summed to calculate a total score, which demonstrated an alpha coefficient of .92. Higher scores represent better adjustment to college in the current study.

Drop-out intentions. The Drop-Out Intentions Measure (Milyavskaya et al., 2009) examines the degree to which students intend to drop out of school. This is an adapted version of Vallerand, Fortier, and Guay's (1997) measure of drop-out intentions. The Drop-Out Intentions Measure consists of three items: "I am thinking of quitting school," "I sometimes think about quitting school," and "Every year, I wonder if I will continue my studies." Participants rated the items on a 5-point scale. Higher scores indicated greater intentions to drop out. The coefficient alpha of the Drop-Out Intentions Measure was .83 in the current study.

Demographic information. A demographics questionnaire was used to collect information regarding participants' age, gender, race/ethnicity, student status, year in college, work status, and generation status.

Results

Table 1 presents the descriptive data for and the intercorrelations among study variables. Correlational analyses revealed that intragroup marginalization, cultural incongruity, perceptions of the university environment, and perceived bicultural competence were each significantly related to college adjustment and drop-out intentions among Latino college students. Furthermore, intragroup marginalization, cultural incongruity, and perceived bicultural competence were significantly related to depression. The only expected relationship that failed to reach significance was between perceptions of the university environment and depression.

Specifically, intragroup marginalization was significantly and positively correlated with symptoms of depression ($r = .37$) and drop-out intentions ($r = .26$) and negatively correlated with college adjustment ($r = -.30$). Cultural incongruity was significantly

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics and Correlations Among Study Variables (N = 117).

Measures	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Intragroup marginalization	—	−.50**	−.16	−.32**	.26**	.37**	−.30**
Cultural incongruity		—	−.34**	−.26**	.29**	.41**	−.36**
University environment			—	.24**	−.21*	−.16	.27**
Bicultural competence				—	−.28**	−.26**	.31**
Drop-out intentions					—	.41**	−.49**
Depression						—	−.69**
College adjustment							—
M	30.06	31.52	77.11	176.39	5.47	19.24	167.95
SD	12.60	12.85	14.35	31.74	3.14	3.82	47.64

*p ≤ .05 (two-tailed). **p < .01 (two-tailed).

Table 2. Summary of Multiple Regression Analyses of Variables Predicting Depression, College Adjustment, and Drop-Out Intentions.

Predictors	Depression			College adjustment			Drop-out intentions		
	B	SE B	β	B	SE B	β	B	SE B	β
Intragroup marginalization	.06	.03	.18	−.45	.38	−.12	.03	.03	.11
Cultural incongruity	.08	.03	.29**	−.76	.38	−.20*	.04	.03	.15
University environment	.00	.02	.00	.44	.30	.13	−.02	.02	−.10
Bicultural competence	−.02	.01	−.12	.29	.14	.19*	−.02	.01	−.19*

*p ≤ .05 (two-tailed). **p < .01 (two-tailed).

and positively correlated with symptoms of depression ($r = .41$) and drop-out intentions ($r = .29$) and negatively correlated with college adjustment ($r = −.36$). Furthermore, there was a negative, statistically significant relationship between positive perceptions of the university environment and drop-out intentions ($r = −.21$); and a positive, statistically significant relationship between positive perceptions of the university environment and college adjustment ($r = .27$). Finally, bicultural competence was significantly and negatively correlated with depression ($r = −.26$) and drop-out intentions ($r = −.28$) and positively correlated with college adjustment ($r = .31$).

We also performed three multiple regression analyses to identify significant predictors of depression, college adjustment, and drop-out intentions among Latino college students; see Table 2 for results. The model examining the effects of the predictor variables of intragroup marginalization, cultural incongruity, university environment, and bicultural competence on depression was statistically significant, $R^2 = .22$, $F(4, 112) = 7.72$, $p < .001$. Cultural incongruity was the most influential and only significant predictor of depression, suggesting that greater experiences of cultural incongruity predict greater depressive symptoms among Latino college

students. The model assessing the effects of these predictor variables on college adjustment also was statistically significant, $R^2 = .20$, $F(4, 112) = 7.20$, $p < .001$. Cultural incongruity and perceived bicultural competence emerged as significant predictors of college adjustment within the model. Greater experiences of cultural incongruity are uniquely associated with poorer college adjustment. The results also indicate that perceived bicultural competence is related to better college adjustment among Latino college students when other factors are controlled. Finally, the multiple regression predicting drop-out intentions was statistically significant, $R^2 = .15$, $F(4, 112) = 4.80$, $p < .01$. Perceived bicultural competence was the only significant predictor of drop-out intentions.

Discussion

This study examined variables associated with Latino college students' educational and psychological outcomes, with the potential to highlight areas of individual- and systemic-level interventions within academic institutions.

Intragroup marginalization emerged as a risk factor significantly associated with negative educational and psychological outcomes within our sample. Latino college students who experienced greater marginalization by family members reported greater depressive symptoms, college maladjustment, and intentions to drop-out of college than those who experienced less intragroup marginalization. These results are consistent with Cano et al.'s (2013) finding of a relationship between familial intragroup marginalization and depression among Latino college students. Llamas and Morgan Consoli (2012) found that intragroup marginalization by family was inversely related to Latino college students' emotional adjustment to college. The current study extends past findings by revealing an association between familial intragroup marginalization and both academic and emotional components of college adjustment. Furthermore, this is the first study to date to report a relationship between intragroup marginalization and drop-out intentions among Latino college students.

Cultural incongruity was also verified as a risk factor significantly associated with undesirable psychological and educational outcomes among Latino college students. It appears that when Latino college students' academic institutions promote values inconsistent with their own, they are more likely to feel depressed, exhibit poor college adjustment, and intend to drop out. When controlling for the effects of other risk and protective factors, cultural incongruity was the only variable that accounted for unique variance in depression. Furthermore, cultural incongruity emerged as the strongest predictor of college adjustment. These findings are consistent with previous findings that Latino college students in culturally inconsistent institutions tend to experience greater depressive symptoms and less psychological well-being (Cano et al., 2013; Gloria et al., 2005; Gloria et al., 2009). Previous studies have also linked cultural incongruity to Latino college students' academic outcomes, including college GPA and persistence attitudes (Cerezo & Chang, 2013; Edman & Brazil, 2009; Gloria & Robinson Kurpius, 1996). The current study expands upon previous research by

identifying cultural incongruity as associated with college adjustment and drop-out intentions.

Latinos with positive perceptions of the university environment reported better college adjustment and fewer drop-out intentions than those with negative environmental perceptions. Although all participants attended the same university, some viewed the environment as warm and welcoming while others experienced it as cold and unfriendly. Varying perspectives exist because students can have distinct experiences that inform their unique perceptions. These results are consistent with past findings. For example, Edman and Brazil (2009) found that GPA among Latino college students was associated with perceptions of the university environment, such that students who earned lower grades were often in cold and unwelcoming environments. These findings suggest that when Latino college students are shown that minority students are valued on campus and they have experiences with university personnel who are invested in their success, they are more likely to adjust well to college and less likely to consider dropping out.

Contrary to expectations, depression was not associated with perceptions of the university environment. However, researchers have found that the relationship between perceived university environment and psychological well-being among Latino college students is moderated by gender, such that the relationship exists for men rather than women (Gloria et al., 2005; Gloria et al., 2009). Given that 75% of the current sample identified as female, it is possible that a relationship might have emerged if more Latino males were represented in the study. Based on our regression analyses, our findings suggest that factors other than perceptions of the university environment have a larger association with psychological and academic outcomes among Latino college students. Thus, targeting the cultural sensitivity of academic institutions for intervention rather than the general university climate may be more impactful.

Moreover, Latino college students who felt more competent in flexibly shifting between their cultural identities to meet situational demands were less likely to experience depressive symptoms, to intend to drop out of college, and to struggle to adjust to college than their peers with lower bicultural competence. These results are consistent with previous findings that Latino college students with a higher degree of perceived bicultural competence experience fewer depressive symptoms, greater mental health, and greater psychological well-being (Carrera & Wei, 2014; David et al., 2009; Wei et al., 2010). When controlling for the effects of other study variables, perceived bicultural competence accounted for unique variance in college adjustment and drop-out intentions, but not depression. Therefore, perceived bicultural competence appears to be a salient protective factor for Latino college students' educational outcomes, whereas other factors (e.g., cultural incongruity) may have more influence over depressive symptoms.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

First, the current study utilized a cross-sectional design, which means no conclusions about the causality of any of the relationships should necessarily be made. Second, the

generalizability of the study is limited due to the nature of sample, which consisted exclusively of Latino-identified undergraduate students at one university. Third, this study did not account for heterogeneity within the pan-ethnic group of Latinos. Our participants identified themselves as of Latino or Hispanic heritage, but specific sub-groups within the Latino community were not examined. Future researchers can conduct longitudinal studies to determine causality. Researchers can also expand on our findings by collecting a larger and more geographically diverse sample, assessing participants from across the country in both rural and urban college settings, with varying levels of representation of Latino college students on campus.

Implications

University administrators can work to enhance Latino students' college adjustment and reduce depressive symptoms through institutional-level interventions designed to mitigate cultural incongruity and promote perceived bicultural competence. There is a long history of researchers calling for institutions to create environments that are more welcoming and culturally affirming to Latino students (Cano et al., 2013; Gloria & Robinson Kurpius, 1996). One way of decreasing cultural incongruity and bolstering bicultural competence among Latinos is by enhancing the cultural competencies of all members of the campus community. Rather than conceptualizing cultural acquisition as a unidirectional process that unduly burdens individuals in minority cultures, cultural acquisition should be understood as a bidirectional process in which members of majority and minority cultures strive to attain knowledge and skills associated with each other's cultures (LaFromboise et al., 1993).

Several researchers have emphasized that increasing the representation of Latino students, faculty, and staff on college campuses is an important step in creating an inclusive environment (Hagedorn, Chi, Cepeda, & McLain, 2007; Hurtado, Clayton-Pedersen, Allen, & Milem, 1998; Milem, Chang, & Antonio, 2005). In addition, increasing Latino students' access to other members of their ethnic group may promote their perceived bicultural competence by providing opportunities to maintain or build their cultural skills within their heritage group. Researchers have highlighted the importance of creating cultural spaces on campus including racial/ethnic student organizations where minority students can build community and explore their cultural identities (Milem et al., 2005). Milem et al. (2005) argued that because college students often gravitate toward homogeneous institutional spaces, academic institutions must intentionally create opportunities for cross-cultural interactions. For example, institutions can regularly provide opportunities for structured cross-cultural dialogue by integrating them into coursework, offering course credit for them, or providing incentives for interorganizational involvement among racial and ethnic student organizations. The researchers also recommended institutional policies (e.g., modifying residence hall architecture) that would foster interracial friendships among first-year students. Finally, universities can maintain mentorship programs for Latino students (Gloria & Rodriguez, 2000). Access to Latino mentors may promote perceived bicultural competence if students have the opportunity to learn from mentors about

effective strategies for navigating cultural environments within and outside of their heritage groups.

Other interventions to promote the well-being of Latino undergraduates are best addressed by university counseling centers (UCCs). It is recommended that UCC providers assess experiences of cultural incongruity among Latinos in counseling who are exhibiting depressive symptoms or college maladjustment. Cano et al. (2013) recommended UCC providers ask Latino students direct questions about issues they face in the academic environment. Cerezo, McWhirter, Peña, Valdez, and Bustos (2013) also recommended that counselors examine Latino students' experiences of microaggressions in social and academic contexts.

Researchers have advocated for mental health providers to intervene to enhance bicultural competence among minority college students (Carrera & Wei, 2014; Wei et al., 2010). The findings of the current study suggest that doing so could promote college adjustment and persistence. In counseling, UCC providers can assess for the six skill-based dimensions of perceived bicultural competence by asking about Latino students' social ties within both cultures, comfort with communicating with others inside and outside their heritage group, attitudes about and knowledge of both cultures, beliefs about biculturalism, and ability to shift behaviors in different cultural contexts. UCC providers can also explore the quality of clients' social connections and assist them in increasing social support from family, peers, and university personnel within their heritage culture and mainstream American culture.

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