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School Experiences of Early Adolescent Latinos/as at
Risk for Emotional and Behavioral Disorders

ABSTRACT

Previous research has shown that Latino/a middle school students exhibiting emotional or behavioral disturbance are at risk for undesirable academic outcomes. The purpose of this study was to understand the perceptions and experiences of at-risk Latino/a students to identify ways to improve interventions designed to promote their academic retention and success. Participants included 11 Latino/a students between the ages of 11 and 13, 8 male and 3 female, who were screened for being at risk for behavior disorders using the Systematic Screening for Behavior Disorders. These students shared their perceptions and experiences of schooling during in-depth qualitative interviews. Interpretative phenomenological analysis was used to understand how students made sense of their school experiences. Students' descriptions tended to be contextualized within relationships with peers, teachers, and family members. Many students shared experiences of being the target of overt racism and microaggressions from peers. Students believed they were more likely to be successful in school when teachers displayed flexibility with deadlines, provided extra help, and communicated a sense of warmth and caring. The data from this study suggested that school psychologists can benefit from attending to the perceptions of at-risk students, which in the context of this study would entail facilitating an inclusive school climate, fostering effective teacher and student relationships, and facilitating parent-teacher relationships during the difficult transition from elementary to middle school.

KEYWORDS: At-risk Latino students, early adolescent students, social-emotional screening

Introduction

In the recent past, educational agencies have increased their focus on understanding and meeting the needs of Latino/a students in public schools (e.g., White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans, 2011). Despite initiatives seeking to meet the needs of these students, recent estimates indicate that only half of Latino/a students earn their high school diploma on time, with 25% being prepared for college-level work. Only 13% of Latinos in the U.S. have a college degree, and only 4% have a graduate degree (White House Fact Sheet: Improving Educational Opportunities and Outcomes for Latino Students, n.d.). Achievement gaps persist despite an increased focus on improving Latino/a educational outcomes (National Center for Education Statistics, 2007). Multiple initiatives seem to have failed to meet the needs of individuals, a common difficulty with top-down solutions to multi-layered problems (Gándara & Contreras, 2009).

Among the least understood Latino/a students are those who are at risk for emotional/behavioral disturbance (EBD). These students are particularly likely to disengage from schooling and to experience school discipline (e.g., expulsion and suspension), which compounds the likelihood of academic failure (Gregory, Skiba, & Noguera, 2010). Cultural differences and misinterpretations are likely to exacerbate misunderstandings about these students, who often feel marginalized in educational institutions (Ortiz, Flanagan, & Dynda, 2008). To correct possible misperceptions and to inform initiatives by school psychologists and other school personnel to empower Latino/a students, the current study sought to understand the educational experiences of early adolescent Latino/a students who are at risk for EBD.

Educational Outcomes for Latino/a Students

Population projections indicate that ethnic minorities will comprise the majority of the U.S. school enrollment by approximately 2020 (NCES, 2004a). Currently ethnic minorities comprise 43% of the U.S. school population (NCES, 2007), with Latinos constituting 20% of all students. Latinos are the largest and fastest growing minority population in the schools (NCES, 2004a), so substantial focus has been placed on their academic achievement (White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans, 2011). Unfortunately, Latino/a students have a dropout rate of 22%, compared to 6% of White students and 10% of African American students (NCES, 2007). These differences are widely attributed to the fact that Latinos experience a larger number of environmental risk factors, including higher rates of poverty and substantially lower family incomes than White students (National Center for Children in Poverty, 2005).

Numerous forms of bias or discrimination from peers, teachers, school staff, and community members may also disadvantage Latino/a students (Davison Avilés, Guerrero, Barajas, Howarth, & Thomas, 1999). For instance, Latino/a students are more likely than their White counterparts to be expelled or be given an out-of-school suspension when they are involved in similar negative behaviors, and they are over-represented among discipline referrals (Skiba et al., 2011). Even when bias is unintentional, school systems reflect the values of the dominant culture, such that school personnel unfamiliar with Latin American cultures may misunderstand or fail to appreciate the contexts and worldviews of Latino/a students (Calabrese & Barton, 1995). Thus mismatches and dissonance between home and school cultures contribute to students' challenges (Artiles & Trent, 1994; Gay & Howard, 2000). For instance, research has shown that students with parents born outside the U.S. were more likely to be placed in special

education classes (Figueroa & Hernandez, 2000), and less acculturated Latino/a students received significantly lower ratings in the areas of learning, motivation, creativity, and leadership than were more acculturated Latino/a peers (Masten & Plata, 2000). Without adequate training regarding cultural differences (President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans, 2003), school personnel may unwittingly presume deficiency in minority students (Henze & Hauser, 1999) and thus fail to foster their academic success.

Research has shown that social and emotional resilience is a key predictor of academic progress among Latinos (Castro-Olivo, Preciado, Sanford, & Perry, 2011) and that Latinos tend to emphasize the social components of schooling (Schulte, Slate, & Onwuegbuzie, 2011). Thus the academic success of Latino/a children must be considered within the context of emotional and behavioral issues (Hosp, 2008).

Outcomes for Students with EBD

Students with EBD have substantial difficulty creating and maintaining satisfactory relationships. Over time they exhibit maladaptive behavior and feelings that are significantly different from generally accepted age-appropriate ethnic or cultural norms, which adversely affect their educational performance (National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities [NICCYD], 2004; Reid, Gonzalez, Nordness, Trout, & Epstein, 2004). Compared to their peers, students with EBD have poorer attendance, lower grades, and greater likelihood of being placed in restrictive classroom settings (Rock, Fessler, & Church, 1997). Students with EBD demonstrate unacceptable classroom behavior and are more frequently referred to mental health professionals while in school (Gresham, MacMillan, & Bocian, 1996). They lack positive reciprocal interactions with peers and tend to be unaccepted by peers (Kauffman & Landrum, 2009).

Students identified with EBD have the worst outcomes of any group of individuals with disabilities (Rock et al., 1997); nearly two-thirds do not graduate from high school (Zigmond, 2006). Given this fact and the increased likelihood for Latino/a students to receive school discipline despite equivalent behaviors (Skiba et al., 2011) and the increased likelihood for students receiving school discipline to drop out of school (Gregory et al., 2010), it stands to reason that Latino/a students with EBD may be among the students most at risk for poor academic outcomes.

Research confirms that Latino/a students with EBD frequently drop out of school and rarely attend college (e.g., Hosp, 2008). Although a very small percentage (0.04%) of Latino/a students are identified as EBD (NCES, 2004b), Latino/a students report more severe depressive symptoms at disproportionately higher rates than other groups (Zychinski & Polo, 2012). And although Latino/a students are often underrepresented in school EBD units, they are frequently overrepresented in other settings that serve youth with behavioral and emotional concerns, such as juvenile detention centers (National Council on Crime and Delinquency, 2007). Accurate understanding of Latino/a students at risk for EBD and of interventions that match their specific needs may alleviate these negative outcomes better than traditional behavioral approaches insensitive to cultural dynamics (Smith, 2010; Smith, Domenech Rodríguez, & Bernal, 2011).

The Need to Consider Lived Experience: Benefits of Qualitative Inquiry

The classification criteria for EBD are broad and have been heavily criticized because of a lack of clarity and specificity, which makes it difficult to inform intervention strategies (Kauffman & Landrum, 2009). An individual might exhibit a single intensely maladaptive behavior (e.g., complete social withdrawal) or a combination of multiple behaviors (e.g., aggression and depression, anxiety and noncompliance). And these behaviors may vary from

context to context, depending on the youth's experiences and environment. Effective interventions for students who are at risk for EBD, therefore, need to align with lived experiences (Smith, 2010).

Understanding students' lived experiences is even more essential when their cultural background is frequently misunderstood (Smith, 2004; 2010). Negative assumptions about Latinos and their differences in cultural values can increase the number of risks those students experience (Rivers & Morrow, 1995). With the specific difficulties of being in an ethnic minority added to the challenges of having emotional and behavioral difficulties, Latino/a students need educators who understand their worldviews and can effectively collaborate to create meaningful interventions. In this study we interviewed early adolescent Latino/a students who were identified as being at risk for EBD. We specifically sought to understand how the students viewed their schooling, including both barriers and supports that they encounter in school. Such information would enhance our ability to appropriately intervene and effectively serve at-risk Latino/a students.

Method

This study was conducted collaboratively between representatives of a university and a middle school located in a neighboring midsize city in the intermountain west. Institutional Review Board approval to conduct the study was received from the authors' university and from the school district. Participants in this study were identified from among students screened in a larger study that focused on implementing positive behavior intervention supports in secondary settings (U.S. Office of Special Education Programs Grant No. H324C030124). The present study was completely distinct in purpose and procedures from the larger study; they overlapped only in that the screening instrument used in the larger study allowed for the identification of

students at risk for EBD. For this study, we specifically considered the educational experiences of Latino/a students.

To obtain in-depth information about the participants' experiences and perceptions, we used qualitative methods of data collection with interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA). IPA seeks to capture how individuals make sense of their experiences (Smith & Shinebourne, 2012). The IPA method was particularly useful for this study because it adapts to the participants' styles of communication and helps account for their cultural worldviews (Coutinho & Oswald, 1998; Coutinho, Oswald, Best, & Forness, 2002). The researchers emphasized depth, not breadth, as they sought to accurately describe the participants' lived experiences with data gleaned from multiple interactions with the participants and their parents.

Screening and Selection of Participants

Potential Latino/a student participants for this study were sought from a middle school with demographics representative of the school district, in which approximately 9% of the student population was Latino/a and the remaining students were predominantly White/European American. Participants had been identified in the sixth grade as being at risk for emotional or behavioral problems using the Systematic Screening for Behavior Disorders (SSBD; Walker & Severson, 1992). The SSBD is a three-stage multiple-gated screening procedure used to identify students with significant behavior problems; it was originally normed for K-6 students. The SSBD has been standardized and normed, and has received adequate evidence of reliability and validity (Kelley, 1998; Zlomke & Spies, 1998); several studies have established its appropriateness for screening adolescent students (e.g., Caldarella, Young, Richardson, Young, & Young, 2008; Richardson, Caldarella, Young, Young, & Young, 2009). In previous research the test-retest reliability coefficient for Stage One rankings of internalizing behavior was .72 and

externalizing behavior was .79; inter-rater agreement on the internalizing and externalizing dimensions of Stage One has ranged from .82 to .94 (Walker & Severson, 1992). The internal consistency for the Stage Two subscales was estimated above .80 (Walker & Severson, 1992). In short, the SSBD has consistently shown evidence of adequate validity and reliability scores (e.g., Kelley, 1998; Zlomke & Spies, 1998). Although the SSBD has limitations, its overall screening process is logical and practical, and it has been well supported by research (Kelly, 1998); it has been labeled the gold standard of screening instruments because of its multi-gated and universal strategies (Lane, Parks, Kalbert, & Carter, 2007).

Teachers trained in using the SSBD conducted a school-wide screening and ranked all students on externalizing or internalizing behavior profiles according to the outlined protocol of SSBD Stage One. The three highest ranked students from each teacher were then evaluated by their teachers using the SSBD Stage Two criteria, which included ranking students on normed cutoff scores (Critical Events Index and Combined Frequency Index) to estimate the individual student's level of needed interventions. Only those students who met or exceeded the normed cutoff scores of the secondary level of risk from Stage Two were eligible for inclusion in this study.

From the school-wide screening using the SSBD, 24 Latino/a students who met the clinical cut-off scores of the SSBD Stage Two, designating them as at risk for emotional or behavioral problems. Of the 24 students, 9 did not participate in this study due to moving/transferring schools and changing contact information, being suspended or expelled from school during the time of the study, or having parents decline or withdraw consent to the participate. Of those initially identified, 4 students were not contacted because data saturation had been met after 11 extensive interviews had been conducted over a period of several months.

The participants came from two separate yearly screenings, which occurred in Spring 2005 and Spring 2006. Three participants were from the 2005 screening; eight were from the 2006 screening. Each student was interviewed in the summer following their identification; follow-up interviews were completed in the fall of each year, approximately three to four months following the first interview.

The number of participants matched the guidelines for research using interpretive phenomenological analysis, which relies on in-depth accounts from a few participants, almost always fewer than 15 (Reid, Flowers, & Larkin, 2005). After the in-depth interviews had been conducted and data from the 11 students had been analyzed, thematic saturation was achieved, so additional participants were unnecessary (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006).

Students were interviewed during their sixth grade year and during the beginning of their seventh grade year. The students were between the ages of 11 and 13 during the initial interview; eight were male, and three were female (see Appendix B for further information regarding participants). The three females were identified as exhibiting primarily internalizing behaviors, although one of them was considered to have externalizing behaviors as well. Seven of the eight males were identified as having primarily externalizing behaviors, with only one having primarily internalizing behaviors. Five of the eleven students had been born in the United States. All the children spoke English fluently, and all but one also spoke Spanish fluently. English was the language spoken at school, but Spanish was the primary language spoken in four of the homes and the exclusive language spoken in four of the homes. The children were given the option to be interviewed in Spanish or English (the interviewer spoke both fluently); all preferred English.

The participants' parents had all been born in Mexico or Central America. All twenty of the live-in parents spoke Spanish; four of the parents spoke English fluently. All of the parents had moved to the United States as adults except for three of the mothers, who had attended school in the United States as children.

Data Collection

The parent(s) were contacted by telephone to ask if they would be interested in allowing their child to participate in this study and if so to schedule an initial home visit. During this visit the interviewer described the purpose of the study, confirmed the child's ethnicity, answered parents' and adolescents' questions, acquired written consent from the parent(s) and assent from the children, built rapport, and scheduled follow-up appointments to conduct interviews. Parents did not participate in formal interviews, but general, non-sensitive information gathered from them over the course of coordinating the interviews with their child provided contextual data for interpreting the student interviews.

Prior to the interviews, sample questions were developed and endorsed by the full research team. The primary investigator verified these sample questions with early adolescent Latino/a students from a school not included in this study. Questions that provided substantial data were kept; other questions were amended or excluded. This procedure helped to refine the interview questions, which were then reviewed and endorsed a second time by the full research team.

The open-ended, semi-structured interview format used in this study aligned with the purpose of the study to obtain rich descriptive data regarding personal experience (Kvale, 1996). This flexible format allowed for meaningful interpersonal exchanges with the participants, such as follow-up questioning based on their spontaneous responses and explanations. Interviews

were conducted at the participants' homes under the assumption that students would be more open and provide richer data when interviewed in their home atmosphere rather than at school; also the school district required that the interviews not interfere with instruction during a school day. The primary researcher and an assistant conducted the interviews together. Having two interviewers present was a condition stipulated by the school district; fortunately it was beneficial in enabling initial discussions of the data afterward.

All interviews were recorded and then transcribed; field notes were taken in case of audio recorder malfunction (which did not occur). An initial interpretation of themes from each interview was conducted using field notes and the transcription. Students' statements were interpreted for meaning and then reviewed for inclusion into broader themes. Interpretations from each individual interview were compared to those from other interviews and subsequent interviews to determine overarching themes. Following the initial interpretation, the researchers then returned to the home of each participant to confirm the meaning and interpretation of the data (Reid et al., 2005), ask follow-up and clarifying questions, and compensate the student for his/her time. The confirmation and follow-up questions were included to protect against bias and inappropriate subjectivity in the analysis and to increase the likelihood of coherence in the final in-depth analysis (Kvale, 1996).

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using interpretive phenomenology (Reid et al., 2005; Smith & Shinebourne, 2012). This idiographic method uses a psychological approach to describe experience (phenomenology) and individuals' perceptions of those experiences (interpretation). Specifically, researchers use interpretive phenomenology to look for insights into how individuals make sense of the world: in this case, how the Latino/a students at risk for EBD

interpreted their experiences in school. The interviewer attempted to facilitate detailed participant descriptions to probe for depth in students' accounts. The qualitative interviews were designed to capture the students' interpretations of their own actions and to elicit information about contexts impacting the students' schooling. Accurately understanding the meaning of human actions necessarily entails considering the contexts in which the events occurred; the same human action can be interpreted differently due to context (Schwandt, 2000).

To generate authentic representations of the participants' experiences in school, researchers reviewed field notes and transcripts multiple times across multiple occasions to generate conceptually consistent themes. The researchers followed the interpretation principles outlined by Kvale (1996) and included (a) reading the interviews to grasp the general meaning, (b) identifying themes, (c) developing meaning of themes, (d) returning to the global meaning of the interview in light of the deepening meaning of the parts, (e) continuing this interpretation until the data were organized into reasonable parts forming a cohesive whole, and (f) comparing the interpretation of single statements to the global meaning.

To maintain the methodological rigor of this qualitative study, the researchers implemented multiple strategies for increasing the trustworthiness of the data and the accuracy of data interpretation as outlined by Lincoln and Guba (1985): prolonged engagement, persistent observation, triangulation, negative case analysis, member checking, and peer debriefing. Fluent in Spanish and involved in the Spanish-speaking community, the primary researcher spent time building rapport with the participants and their families through multiple phone calls and home visits prior to conducting interviews. Following the initial interviews, the primary researcher and another member of the research team independently reviewed the transcripts, distilled themes (as described in the previous paragraph), and subsequently reviewed one another's interpretations.

When discrepancies in interpretations occurred, the researchers referred back to the data to arrive at a consensus. Negative case analysis involved scrutiny of interviews with information that contradicted the initial interpretations, which were subsequently refined to better represent the breadth of experiences described by the participants. The resulting interpretations were then presented individually to all participants in their homes approximately four months after the initial interviews. During this member checking procedure, the investigators asked clarifying questions to enhance the accuracy of interpretation. The researchers specifically invited corrections of misinterpretations and solicited additional information to improve the accuracy of the interpretations. The participants' responses during the follow-up interviews resulted in a second round of independent review by the same two reviewers, who subsequently conferred and finalized conceptual themes that were consistent with the participants' initial reports and the follow-up interviews. As a final check to ensure that the interpretations authentically captured the participants' descriptions, three additional members of the research team provided peer debriefing, independently reviewing the final themes and examining the methodology. Thus multiple interactions with the participants and their families over time, coupled with multiple perspectives and careful scrutiny of the methods and the data, helped to substantiate the trustworthiness of the interpretations.

Results

Interview data revealed five themes in the perspectives and experiences of the Latino/a student participants at risk for EBD. Students primarily shared experiences involving their peers, teachers, and schools, and they also discussed cultural and family issues.

Theme 1: Experiences of Verbal Aggression and Microaggression at School

Questions about discriminatory experiences related to race/ethnicity were not included in the initial interview guidelines; however, because the first three interviews revealed that the participants were experiencing negative peer interactions that they attributed to ethnicity/race differences, subsequent interviews remained open to this subject and a neutrally-worded open-ended prompt was included if subsequent interviewees had not raised these issues by the end of the interview (e.g., “Tell me about your interactions with your peers—those who are Latino/a and those who are not”).

Students consistently reported being the target of both blatant ethnic slurs and microaggressions, which are subtler but nevertheless transparent putdowns or denigrating messages based on ethnicity (Sue et al., 2007). All of the eleven students acknowledged the frequent occurrence of verbal aggression and microaggression as well as more intense discriminatory remarks; eight admitted to being the victim of such remarks. The three remaining students reported hearing/seeing this happen to their Latino/a peers. The majority of students stated that negative verbal statements were typically made out of the awareness of school personnel and that such remarks were frequent: “like all the time [maybe] every other day” (Student J), “the whole year last year” (Student B), and “daily” (Student E).

Student B, a soft-spoken male identified as being an externalizer, said, “They call me and my friends ‘beaners’ or like ‘wetbacks.’ Or they ask me where my green card is and stuff, and they tell us to ‘go back to our country.’ I could tell them that this is my country.” He added that other hurtful and racist statements were made that he did not want to share. Later in the interview he returned to this subject by saying, “Some [White kids] are racists to my friends” and that “[the White kids] always want to fight.”

Student E, a female whose parents were considering moving her to another school, partly because of the discriminatory atmosphere, said, “There was this girl who was saying mean things to me . . . a ‘stupid head’ and that I was a ‘Mexican.’” Student J, a male, said a frequent verbal aggression of choice was “Grease bum.” He added that sometimes students’ experiences involved physical aggression: “[White kids] shove in the hall and trip [Latinos] on purpose.”

Seven of the participants’ reactions often led to behavioral problems that interfered with academic success. For example, all seven participants reported becoming angry when hearing negative or discriminatory statements, while six reported retaliating physically (and sometimes having teachers attend to the fighting but not the verbal aggression that provoked it). Student E attributed some of her behavioral problems to commonly hearing blatant racial slurs: “When I get mad, I get mean. Something that makes me really mad is if someone says something mean about me or one of my friends. . . . Sometimes they say that ‘Mexicans are stupid and dumb.’ . . . They say it when the teachers can’t hear or see, and we don’t tell on them.” Student B, a male who was extremely reserved during the interviews, said that when such verbal statements are made to him he wants to physically fight back, but he does not want to be suspended. He said when there is fighting, “We [Latino/a students] get in trouble, not them [White students].” Student A, another male, said something similar: “No, it doesn’t make me feel sad; it just makes me feel angry . . . and like I could never hit them because there is always a teacher around.” After being the victim of a discriminatory remark from a White student, Student E responded, “You better shut up,” but “the teacher was behind me and said, ‘What did you say?’ and then she sent me to the office.”

Three students used passivity and attempted to avoid the individuals who consistently made negative statements. Avoidance was more frequently reported among the females, who

occasionally skipped class to avoid conflict with peers. Student K said that she sluffed/skipped class because students taunted her and “tried to fight me and would leave notes on my locker saying bad stuff about ‘oh you brownies.’” Student E said that she wanted more adult supervision in the hallways to feel safer. Since that did not happen, she and her friends walked as a group in the hallways and skipped class together.

Toward the end of the interviews students were asked what they would do to make the school better if they were in charge. Five of the eleven provided suggestions that would be typical of 11-13 year-old students (e.g., have better food in the vending machine, have longer recess, get out of school earlier), but four gave responses that referred back to their experience of microaggression. They wanted “for everyone to like everybody and have no confliction,” to have “peacefulness,” for other students “to not be racist,” “to have more Mexicans and nicer students,” for “kids to not actually say [racist] stuff,” to more actively punish students who made verbal and physical aggression, and to have more adult supervision “to stop kids from sluffing and stop fights.”

Theme 2: Emotional and Academic Support from Peer Relationships

All participants reported highly valuing their peers, especially their Latino/a peers. All students mentioned looking to their friends for support, protection, and strength. For instance, Student E said, “Some kids are really mean, and I don’t feel safe, so I hang out with my friends.” Student G did not report being the victim of negative verbal statements himself; he said that his friends protected him from negative treatment: “I have White friends, and [other White kids] don’t mess with me because some of my older White friends stick up for me.”

Three students reported having such strong allegiance to their friends that if one got into trouble the others would also get in trouble by defending the friend in verbal or physical ways.

One of these students said, “But if I get in trouble, then my friends are like, ‘If you get in trouble, then we’ll get in trouble.’ So we all get in trouble.” Student E added that when she skipped class, she tended to do so with a close group of friends: “I kind of don’t feel safe [at school], so I hang out with my friends.” Four other students added that they felt more comfortable in classes in which they had friends.

Besides providing protection, peers also provided participants with academic support. Six of the students reported that the worst part about school was the homework. These six students (as well as four who did not say homework was the worst part of school) tended to report difficulties in understanding homework but did not report asking teachers for help. Instead, these students often turned to peers. For instance, Student K detested homework. She said that her non-English-speaking parents were usually unavailable to help with homework, so she often sought help from her 18-year-old female cousin who lived with her. When asked if her cousin speaks English, she responded, “Not good, but she knows how.” Student B, another internalizer, said he typically didn’t understand most of his homework. He described his parents as rarely being home and thus unavailable to help him, but he said, “I can call my cousin. He will probably help me. He shows me how to do it.” His cousin was one year older. This same student said that he didn’t have to bring science homework home “because I have some kids who sit next to me and show me how to do the homework.” He also reported that it was common for his friends to help each other in a similar manner. Three other students reported similarities, having parents who were not available or had limited English skills. Their sources of academic help included an older brother (Student F), a neighbor (Student G), and friends in class who “show me how to do the homework” (Student A).

Student E held her friends in such high regard that she considered them to be her heroes: “[My friends] are my heroes because when I have trouble with my homework, they help me. They help me out a lot.” This same student said she struggled more in classes in which she had fewer friends. Student H said that she often “did not finish my homework because I didn’t understand it.” She added that her parents were frequently too busy with work and family; she did not report getting help from friends either

Three of the five students who did not emphasize the importance of friends had mothers who played a more active role in their academic lives. Two of these students’ mothers had been educated in the United States, and both of these mothers actively sought to transfer their children to another school that they thought would better suit the students’ needs.

Theme 3: Helpful Teacher Behaviors and Reciprocity

Participants consistently talked about helpful and unhelpful behaviors from specific teachers at elementary and middle school. Researchers were not surprised that ten of the eleven students specifically mentioned their preference for teacher attributes were typical of students ages 11-13. They preferred teachers who were “nice,” demonstrated kindness and understanding, included one-on-one interventions, got to know students individually, used humor, used engaging learning methods, and were flexible. In general all clashed with or disliked teachers who were “angry,” “yelled,” and/or were “strict.” Three students went so far as to say that teachers treated Latinos/as differently; they called some teachers “racists.” This was not corroborated in the other eight interviews. Eight participants reported that they responded to teachers depending on how teachers interacted with them.

Student A, a male, stated several reasons for liking one teacher. He felt comfortable in this teacher’s class because she was “understanding” and “not hard” on him. He said, “If you tell

her why your homework is late, then she understands. She'll give you a couple of more days to do it. You have to give her a reason for it being late. I would say, 'I was [running] late' that day, and she would give me extra time." This student went on to explain that this teacher would also offer extra credit to the students to make up for poor performance on assignments.

All students expressed a strong preference for active and engaging teachers who they described as energetic, upbeat, creative, and fun. Student K spoke highly of a math class in which the teacher implemented a series of games to teach the class. "Well the teacher, she invented games, but she does it with math so we can learn." The student went on to share a positive attribute of one of her teachers, "If we were tired, she would try to make us laugh or do something to help us out a lot." Student J said he preferred "energetic and live people." He explained, "Well, there are some teachers that aren't enthusiastic and that are falling asleep, so I would just try to find people that could keep the class up." Student C preferred classes in which the teacher "tells life stories and experiences."

Regarding one-on-one time, Student B, a male, stated that his favorite teacher would sit down next to him during class and explain things to him. He reported that he enjoyed one class in particular, partly because it was smaller and he was able to have more time with the teacher. He said he liked these smaller classes "because I can get help, because she can come around and help me . . . and like when there are big classes, [teachers] don't have time to go around and help." Student E expressed a hope that teachers would intuit her difficulties and "come over and talk to me about it." Student C said he preferred teachers who got to know him better as well as those who would go out of their way to sit down next to him and offer help.

When teachers perceived and understood problems and then took a personal interest in students, positive results occurred. Student H said that she had had difficulties in class until a

teacher offered her more individual attention. “[My teacher] talk[ed] to me because I had problems and . . . he talked to me about changing some things, and I did change some things because before I was goofing off. . . . So he just talked to me and that was all.” She reported that after talking to him, “I don’t know, I just didn’t goof off that much. And after that I started cleaning up the classroom [and being nice].” She went on to say, “He was trying to help me out with my grades because I had really bad ones because I was goofing off. And then I got better grades!”

The inverse of this experience was also true, especially with the female students. They reported acting out if they did not like the class or if they did not feel the teacher understood them. They responded both passively (skipping class) and aggressively (acting out). Student H noted, “If a teacher didn’t like me, I would be mean. It got to the point that I thought the teacher didn’t like me, so I stopped going to class.” She added that if she thought a teacher didn’t like her, “I would be depressed and wouldn’t do what the teacher told me to do.” This participant said that she had a teacher who she thought from the beginning didn’t like her —partly because an older sister had had the teacher—so the student refused to do the class work and ignored the teacher. Student E, another female, felt her teacher embarrassed her and did not like her. Regarding this teacher, she said, “If he doesn’t want me in that class then he won’t have me,” so she began skipping his class. Student C said that if a teacher did not take an interest in him, “I would not want to get to know them that much either; I wouldn’t want to be around them that much.” He shared a story in which he had responded this way to a teacher, and only after he felt the teacher gave him a second chance did he improve his behavior and academics.

Student D said of one of his teachers, “She hates me, and I want to get out of her class.” He ended up skipping this teacher’s class and fell further behind because he assumed the teacher

did not like him. When the student's mother intervened and the teacher allowed him to make up assignments and correct previous work, his grades improved. This student later expressed his belief that his teacher cared for him as she made time for him after school to help him.

In sum, students attributed at least some of their behavioral problems to the quality of the relationship with teachers. Teachers appeared to have either a strongly positive or a distinctly negative influence on the behavior and academics of students solely based on their personal interactions and relationships.

Theme 4: Adjustment to Middle School.

Nine of the students reported difficulties adjusting to middle school in a variety of areas. Problems seemed to emerge with new responsibilities (e.g., increased homework, need for better organizational skills, public focus on academic performance) and from greater emotional detachment from teachers compared to relationships in elementary school.

Students consistently reported difficulty with the challenges of middle school scheduling (i.e., several different teachers with varying expectations); seven reported experiencing a drop in grades and difficulty learning to organize assignments. Student C said, "I was having a harder time [in middle school] because the teachers, they would give out a lot of assignments, and I would have seven classes, so [I] really didn't get to do homework in class, so I had to take all of my homework home." He added, "Well, ever since I moved from the elementary school where I was getting *As* or *Bs* and then I moved to [middle school], and it was really hard because I had to be more organized and it was harder for me to get an *A*. He explained that his mother recognized what was happening and taught him some organization skills. Student G said, "I used to have like one teacher, and now we have like seven teachers and I can't keep up." A majority of the participants regarded their elementary teachers highly, and they perceived that those teachers

knew them and cared for them individually. Student D attributed some of his behavioral problems and difficulties to the “unfamiliarity with the school [and] not understanding how things worked.” Student I shared, “Elementary school was easier, and I didn’t get as distracted. My teachers knew me better, and they found out what I liked, and they don’t do that in middle school.”

Part of the difficulty adjusting to middle school seemed to involve negative verbal remarks from fellow students, which they hadn’t experienced in elementary school. Two students summed up the experiences of eight students: Student A said, “Kids didn’t actually say racist stuff in elementary school,” and Student I said, “[In elementary school] there weren’t White kids that picked on us.”

Theme 5: Difficulty Asserting Needs, Sometimes Compensated by Parent Involvement

Students tended to have difficulty asserting their needs in appropriate ways when dealing with peers as well as with teachers. As mentioned above, participants occasionally responded aggressively or passively to verbal aggression and microaggression. Despite students’ lack of appropriate assertiveness, three of them were fortunate to have involved parents who intervened on their behalf. These interventions inevitably led to increased mutual understanding and to academic and behavioral improvements. For this sample, the degree of parents’ involvement in schooling was associated with the students’ positive experiences at school. Unfortunately, the remaining eight participants did not report parent involvement with school, many describing their parents as being too busy, unavailable, or unable to help them.

As mentioned above, some students reported that they wanted teachers to know and understand their needs, but when problems arose, students tended to avoid the teacher, act out in class, or skip class. Student E, acknowledged that potential embarrassment kept her from

participating in class, and she sometimes refused to do work on the board to avoid humiliation. She stated that her teacher reacted negatively to her refusal, and she began having behavioral problems in his class. Student I indicated that he would not ask questions for fear of embarrassment. He added that the only way he communicated he was struggling was by not turning in homework or by doing it poorly: “If I don’t do the homework, it means I am having trouble or I didn’t understand [the assignment].” He went on to say that if he did not have homework done, teachers would simply tell him to “turn it in” instead of asking him if he was having difficulties—something he wanted them to ask.

This reluctance to share personal needs applied not only to academic work, but also to social/emotional issues. Rather than tell a teacher she was receiving multiple racist notes (i.e., “You brownies go home”), Student K, a female, threw the notes away. Student C reported that when he felt unsafe at school his mother had begun looking for other educational options. “That’s what happened at school when I got in that fight that made me not want to go [to that middle school]. That is what triggered it for me.” He went on to say, “But my mom kept on looking [for a different school] and she found a school . . . And she liked the curriculum, I guess; that is what she told me anyway.” The student reported the transition as being positive: “I like the teachers and the students a lot better.”

Student D also reported benefitting from his mother’s advocacy. He reported feeling anxious and tried to avoid being in class by frequently telling the teacher that he needed to use the bathroom. When this student’s mother (who had been raised in the U.S. and was working in the school) realized that social anxiety was the root of her son’s declining academic performance, she spoke with the teachers. The teachers made accommodations to help minimize the student’s anxiety, and his performance improved.

All of the students expressed grievances with the school, but only the three students mentioned above reported actively attempting to remediate the problems—and in each of these cases it was the parents who intervened. Students often expressed expectations for school personnel to be proactive and take primary responsibility for making improvements and solving problems.

Conceptual Synthesis of Themes

The qualitative themes identified in the interviews with Latino/a students shared a common thread—a prominent emphasis on interpersonal relationships. The students spoke frequently about social interactions (with peers, teachers, and parents) and infrequently of personal, idiosyncratic issues. This narrative thread appeared to reflect the cultural value of *personalismo*, interpersonal interactions that are based on providing emotional support, personal connection, and encouragement (Gloria, Ruiz, & Castillo, 2004). How students viewed and experienced the warmth, support, and encouragement in relationships with peers, teachers, parents, and extended family not only influenced their perceptions of schooling but also their academic performance. Conversely, accounts describing racial microaggressions and lack of interpersonal connections with teachers denoted the antithesis of *personalismo*: *una falta de respeto* (“a lack of respect”). Interpersonal respect/*respeto* is a deep cultural value. Whether positive or negative, school performance was contextualized in terms of relationships.

This relational conceptualization of schooling did not emphasize individual successes or struggles; the perspectives were more collectivistic, emphasizing group dynamics and solidarity. Interviews did not suggest a lack of motivation to achieve in school or pessimism about the value of schooling; both students and parents assumed and desired the benefits of education. Both students and parents spoke in terms of engagement and disengagement with other people.

Discussion

This study contributes to the research literature and to effective practice by articulating the perspectives and experiences of this sample of students, which can help school psychologists and other educators understand the importance of eliciting students' perspectives and incorporating these perspectives in their practice. Participants in this qualitative study of Latino/a middle school students at risk for EBD shared stories about and interpretations of their school experiences. Students did not attribute their academic, emotional, or behavioral difficulties to a lack of intrinsic motivation or to a lack of resources. They neither devalued the need for education nor justified selfish ambitions incompatible with schooling, but they did not blame themselves for their very real problems. The interpretations of their own experiences in school were not characterized by individualism--either self-aggrandizement or self-deprecation. Instead a lens with a social filter was used to discuss the factors that put these students at risk for EBD.

Narratives of school experiences, both positive and negative, emphasized interactions with peers, teachers, and family. The participants in this study appeared to be manifesting behaviors that were culturally consistent for the Latino/a culture but may have exacerbated school problems. The narratives coincided with the cultural values of *afecto*, *respeto* (Baruth & Manning, 1992), *personalismo*, *simpatía*, and *familismo*, with emphasis on having meaningful relationships with *personas de confianza* (Gloria et al., 2004). Educators who acknowledged and incorporated these cultural values in their work facilitated positive peer relationships, promoted supportive student-teacher relationships, and fostered relationships between school personnel and the students' parents/guardians. Thus a culturally congruent emphasis on relationships would not be merely a secondary consideration for school psychologists, but an essential template through which the school experiences of Latino/a students could be understood and facilitated. In some

cases, this may entail a genuine shift in how school psychologists conceptualize situations and intervene (Smith, 2010).

Implications of the Results for Practice

These results have clear implications for school psychologists working with Latino/a students at risk for EBD. The results provide insights into students' lived experiences, as well as information necessary to design genuinely helpful and culturally responsive individual interventions and to enact effective systems change. School psychologists can help problem solving teams to thoughtfully consider how Latino/a values may be influencing a students' behavior and then respond in a culturally sensitive manner. School psychologists who take the lead in systems change can facilitate professional development and other activities that focus on fostering personalismo with students and families.

Student-peer relationships. Another specific contribution of this study is increased awareness of frequent microaggression and in-group/out-group conflicts based on ethnic differences. Previous research has documented that racial microaggressions, such as those described by the students in this study, are associated with psychological distress (Kessler, Mickelson, & Williams, 1999), decreased academic motivation (Alfaro, Umana-Taylor, Gonzales-Backen, Bamaca, & Zeiders, 2009), lower perceived academic ability, perceptions that friends are not interested in school (Wong, Eccles, & Sameroff, 2003), lower academic achievement (DeGarmo & Martinez, 2006), and behavioral problems (Vega, Khoury, Zimmerman, Gil, & Warheit, 1995). Lack of awareness of these microaggressions may be one of several factors that influenced teachers to identify these students as being at risk. School psychologists who consider the existence of microaggressions and other racially charged interactions may more effectively address the needs of Latino/a students.

School psychologists, who may not be aware of in-group/out-group dynamics in their school, can gather data to better understand the undercurrents that exist and then facilitate system change to create an inclusive school culture for all groups. They can work to make the in-group larger, emphasize the shared school identity, and take steps to minimize out-group segregation (Winslade & Williams, 2012).

When considering school climate change, school psychologists can facilitate meaningful conversations about racism. They should take care to avoid suppressing dialogue about racist incidents or driving antagonism out of adult earshot. Previous research has shown that ethnic minority students who are aware of racism actually perform better in school than students who minimize racism (Altschul, Oyserman, & Bybee, 2006).

Student-teacher relationships. The in-group/out-group conceptualization could also be applied to student-teacher relationships. School psychologists can support teachers in understanding and addressing the in-group/out-group dynamics. When participants perceived that teachers understood them, had confidence in their abilities, and gave them individual attention, they reported more educational engagement. Specifically, the emotional high point for several of the students being interviewed was when they recounted instances when a teacher had reached out and included them in some meaningful way. Individual teacher attention communicated to students that they were part of an in-group of learners, a dynamic that influenced the students' academic motivation and connectedness to the school. The participants reported being more willing to meet the teacher's expectations and confide in the teacher about difficulties at home and school when they experienced warmth and encouragement in the teacher-student relationship. The emotional support from school personnel (or lack thereof)

evident in student narratives in this study has been found to be influential by previous research (Brewster & Bowen, 2004; Cloud, 2002).

Students' narratives of positive teacher relationships frequently included an additional relationship quality: flexibility, particularly with respect to timelines. Teachers who made accommodations by giving extra time to complete assignments were seen as kind and supportive. The salience of time flexibility for the students' work is likely associated with cultural differences in time perception, with many Latino cultures valuing flexibility and with school teachers typically valuing/requiring punctuality (Valverde, 2006). We observed that students did not report taking advantage of teachers who gave more time for homework; when students were given extra time, they reported meeting the new deadline and feeling grateful that the teacher understood that the student was trying to learn. When teachers insist on punctuality, a cultural value, at the expense of student academic engagement and learning, the ultimate purpose of schooling may be compromised.

School psychologists can facilitate improved cultural understanding among teachers by helping to coordinate periodic, systematic professional development that focuses on multicultural issues directly pertinent to the students they teach. Multicultural competence training is effective (Smith, Constantine, Dunn, Dinehart, & Montoya, 2006) and when coupled with frequent consultation about cultural issues can remedy unfortunate problems, such as the tendency for teachers to blame Latinos' behavioral problems on the individual but attribute White students' behavioral problems to their environment (Jackson, 2001) and thus adjust teacher expectations that perpetuate the ethnic achievement gap (McKown & Weinstein, 2008).

School psychologists can also promote joint problem solving between teachers and students and help to create and maintain culturally responsive systems and policies. In that

regard, the problem-solving model for conceptualizing needed change can be quite helpful (Curtis, Castillo, & Cohen, 2008). School psychologists can help schools/districts to openly consider culturally responsive options. For example, some systems may unnecessarily foreclose options when they blame Latino/a students for the school's failure to meet academic benchmarks, so school psychologists can promote strategies based on a deeper understanding of the data (and students' experiences), rather than implicitly accepting a superficial and inaccurate interpretation of test scores that perpetuates racial blame. Another example of working at the system level is for school psychologists to encourage administrators to monitor patterns of discipline referrals to ensure that inequities across race/ethnicity do not occur. They can also help to inform behavioral management strategies, as previous research has found that Latino/a students tend to receive punitive discipline when educator subjectivity is likely (Skiba et al., 2011). School leaders can ensure that students have viable, anonymous ways to report bullying or racial microaggressions. Having several personnel designated as the "go-to" persons for handling difficulties in a culturally responsive manner can also be helpful.

Parent-teacher relationships. Our interviews found that the relationship between parents and teachers influenced the ways in which students experienced school. In the few instances in which Latino/a parents in this study initiated contact with teachers to explain their child's difficulties, the teachers responded by providing the additional time or resources needed to help the child feel and be successful. However, most often Latino/a parents seemed to expect school personnel to approach them about their child, which reflected an inherent cultural value of respect for the authority and expertise of teachers (Hill & Torres, 2010). The data also indicated that parents' rigid employment hours and limited English proficiency interfered with their opportunities to initiate contact with teachers. Thus rather than waiting for problems to become

severe and then blaming parents, educators can proactively contact parents (with the assistance of a competent Spanish language translator if necessary) to collaboratively address problems. Teachers may need additional information about how to flexibly approach parents and anticipate the distinct needs and challenges of Latino families and students. Time-conscious teachers can also be reminded that proactively contacting Latino parents to share their students' areas of success and concern may take about 15 minutes, which is more efficient than having a hour meeting to reactively address chronic problems.

Implications for Future Research

This study explored students' experiences; perspectives from other parties are needed. Research inquiry into the experiences of teachers and other school personnel working with Latino/a students would be valuable; particularly studies that examine the interactions between students and teachers. Research conducted separately with these two groups fails to account for the synergy between them and for their different perspectives.

Future research might also benefit from considering participants' experiences (students, teachers, and parents) whenever a policy or program is first implemented. Outcome studies may be strengthened by evaluating *ecological validity*, the degree to which an intervention fits the context and meets local needs and circumstances (Bernal, Bonilla, & Bellido, 1995).

Previous studies have reported benefits to positive Latino/a parent involvement in schools, which can mediate poor outcomes (Jeynes, 2003; Martinez, DeGarmo, & Eddy, 2004), but inadequate qualitative data exist on the topic. Involving Latino/a parents and considering their perceptions in the education process, policies, and procedures would be especially important since Latino/a parents report more negative and unwelcoming instances with the school system do than non-Latinos (Martinez et al., 2004).

Limitations of the Present Study

Conclusions drawn from any qualitative research project are subject to limitations, most notably the accuracy of the reports provided by the participants and the fidelity with which researchers convey the original intent of the participants. Readers should generalize the results with caution; however, the process used and the results reported can provide school psychologists with a place to start in better understanding the needs of at-risk Latino/a students. With respect to that first concern, is it wise to completely trust personal narratives from youth identified as being at risk for EBD? Although logical inconsistencies and possible distortions may have occurred in some instances, we have no reason to suspect that the students were disingenuous or manipulative in the interviews. The interviewer established strong rapport with the participants, who spoke in relaxed, matter-of-fact tones without excessive hyperbole or accusative arguments.

A related second question is whether we should rely on middle school students to generate insights about a highly complex topic? To respond to that question, we reemphasize that the purpose of the study was to accurately portray students' interpretations of their own experiences, not to validate those interpretations. Interpretation is the reality that we sought to understand. The students may have multiple personal limitations, developmentally restricted insight among them, but the students' narratives were certainly coherent, even if articulated in an informal vernacular. We trust the students' accounts as genuine and therefore meaningful.

Another question relates to generalizability: Are the experiences of these particular participants representative of the experiences of Latino/a students elsewhere? We have no way of knowing. Qualitative research is descriptive, never definitive. Recognizing this fact, we have remained as generic as possible in our recommendations for advocacy and practice. Our

suggestions should not be incorporated in other settings without prior verification that the circumstances warrant them. For instance, not every school has a hostile racial climate, so our recommendations regarding school climate change may be unnecessary in some instances. Nevertheless, prior to conducting the interviews we had not believed that the schools we worked with, which had adequate infrastructure and community support and no particularly negative reputations, had nearly the level of racial conflict described by the participants. Our assumption was wrong. The essential point here is that each context should first be understood in its own right before imposition of broad solutions.

Can we ensure that our report accurately portrayed the participants' narratives? We cannot remove ourselves from the interactions we had with the students, and certainly our presence likely influenced their responses. Nevertheless, our attempts to manage our personal biases included using a research team consisting of several members who reviewed the procedures, interview questions, and interview transcripts. Interview summaries and the themes drawn from initial interviews were presented to the participants for their confirmation and additional commentary. An independent reviewer and peer debriefing were used to ensure consistency and trustworthiness of results and interpretations. In short, we followed procedures that would facilitate the accuracy of the representations made in this report.

Finally, it is possible that the participants' experiences are not distinct to at-risk Latino/as. For example, the tendency to attribute negative events to peers is not specific to this group: Steinberg and Dodge (1983) reported that aggressive students are more likely than nonaggressive youth to attribute negative events to the peers. Similarly, all students of all races, cultures and dispositions profit from warm, responsive relationships with teachers. When parents collaborate with teachers to address problems, youth benefit. Students typically seek

peer support when they experience social conflict or struggle with academic work. Even so, this study contributes to understanding the perspectives and experiences of at-risk Latino/a students.

Summary

Understanding the educational experiences of Latino/a students can improve educational practices and the work of school psychologists. Latino/a students in this study often interpreted their educational experiences through the lens of social relationships, yet most academic interventions enacted by school psychologists and other educators address individual performance/behavior, rather than social perceptions and contexts. Nevertheless, such cultural alignments in conceptualization and intervention may be essential to support the academic success of students at risk for EBD, who are among the most likely to disengage from learning, disrupt the learning environment, and drop out of school. Specifically, the data from this study suggested that middle school Latino/a students at-risk for EBD could benefit from systems level changes that promote an inclusive school climate and reduce in-group/out-group dynamics along ethnic lines, foster effective teacher and student relationships, and facilitate parent-teacher relationships during the difficult transition from elementary to middle school. Although that transition can be difficult for students irrespective of ethnic origin or emotional/behavioral disturbance, the shift from a somewhat relationship-oriented environment in elementary school, where students primarily interact with one teacher and a consistent peer group, to a content-oriented environment in middle schools, where students have different classes and teachers for each subject, may pose particular challenges for Latino/a students at risk for EBD. Careful consideration of individuals within their context, including school systems, should characterize the work of school psychologists (Smith, 2004).

System change commonly occurs in top-down fashion through various policies and mandates (see Curtis, Castillo, & Cohen, 2008), but the lived, concrete experiences of the students can and should inform these initiatives. This precept is particularly pertinent when students' needs and experiences differ across cultures. Some student needs are universal, but Latino/a students and students with EBD have some worldviews and experiences that differ from those of other students. The narratives in this study of Latino/a students who were also at risk for EBD suggested that better accounting for social/relationship dynamics can enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of programs and policies intended to promote the educational achievement of those students.

School psychologists are in a better position to serve students when they identify those students' experiences and worldviews -- and adapt their practices accordingly (e.g., Smith et al., 2011). To that end, they could conduct student-focused inquiry, particularly with populations known to be at risk for undesirable academic outcomes.

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Appendix A: Interview Questions

Rapport-building

- Tell me about yourself.
- What do you like to do?
 - Tell me about a time when you did that.
 - What do you like to do with your friends?
- What do people do to make you feel important/special? How do you like people to treat you?
- Who is one of your heroes? How are you similar/different from him/her?
- What's your favorite TV show?
- Who is your favorite celebrity?
- Who helps you the most? What does that person say/do to help you?

Interview Questions/Statements

- What is school like for you?
- What do you like most/least about school?
- Where do you feel most safe/comfortable at school? Tell me about that.
- What do people do to make you feel important/special? Can you tell me about some people who do that/who don't do that?
- What do teachers do to show that they care? Can you tell me about a teacher who did/didn't do that?
- Tell me about a teacher you like. Why do you like that teacher?
- Tell me about a teacher who you think likes you.
- Tell me about a teacher you have a hard time with. What are some things that teachers do to show you that they like you?
- Why do you think that you were identified to be in this class?
- What happens when you do (describe SSBD behavior criteria for which teacher identified the student as at risk)?
 - Describe how your teacher(s) respond to that?
 - Tell me about that teacher.
- Tell me about your interactions with your peers—those who are Latino/a and those who are not. How does this affect you?
- Tell me about what you do with your friends at school outside of class.
- Tell me about your home life and how you do homework at home.
- If I waved a magic wand and things were like you wanted, how would school be different?
 - If I waved a magic wand, how would your teachers be different?
 - What would be different at school if you were in charge for a day?
- If you were in charge of school, what would you do to make the school better?

Appendix B:

Description of Participants

Student	Sex	Demographic Information	SSBD Status
A	Male	Parents born in Mexico Divorced parents; lived with mother Mother fluent in English Student born in U.S. Mother fluent in English and Spanish	E
B	Male	Parents born in Mexico Two-parent home Parents fluent in Spanish Student born in Mexico	E
C	Male	Parents born in Mexico Mother attended school in U.S. Two-parent home Mother fluent in Spanish and English Student born in U.S. Student not fluent in Spanish	E
D	Male	Parents born in Mexico Mother attended school in U.S. Two-parent home Mother fluent in Spanish and English Student born in U.S.	E
E	Female	Parents born in Mexico Parents moved to U.S. as adults Two-parent home Parents not fluent in English Student born in Mexico	E & I
F	Male	Parents born in Mexico Parents moved to U.S. as adults Two-parent home Parents not fluent in English Student born in Mexico Student did some schooling in Mexico	E
G	Male	Parents born in Mexico Parents moved to U.S. as adults Two-parent home Parents not fluent in English Student born in Mexico	E

(continued)

Appendix B: Information Table Regarding Participants (continued)

Student	Sex	Demographic Information	SSBD Status
H	Female	Parents born in Mexico Mother attended some school in U.S. Two-parent home Mother fluent in English Student born in U.S.	I
I	Male	Parents born in Mexico Parents moved to U.S. as adults Two-parent home Parents not fluent in English Student born in Mexico	I
J	Male	Parents born in Central America Parents moved to U.S. as adults One-parent home Mother not fluent in English Student born in U.S.	E
K	Female	Parents born in Mexico Parents moved to U.S. as adults Two-parent home Parents not fluent in English Student born in Mexico	I