

BICULTURALISM AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING: INVESTIGATING THE ROLE OF SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: This online study investigated the role of socioeconomic status in previously established relationships between bicultural identity integration (or bicultural self-efficacy) and psychological well-being (or life satisfaction) among bicultural immigrant students at a large Canadian university ($N=403$).

Method: A comprehensive measure of socioeconomic status was utilized to measure the incomes, levels of education and occupational statuses of participants' guardians, as well as to determine participants' access to financial resources, and their sources of psychosocial supports and stressors (in the domains of interpersonal relationships, home and neighbourhood environment, individual health, and religious affiliation).

Results: The study found that socioeconomic status is responsible for a large amount of variance in the relationships between bicultural identity integration (or bicultural self-efficacy) and psychological well-being (and life satisfaction). Within socioeconomic status, the domains of interpersonal relationships and surrounding environment were significant contributors to these relationships, while guardians' incomes, levels of education, and occupational statuses were insignificant, along with participants' financial resources, individual health and religious affiliation.

BACKGROUND

Bicultural individuals live in two distinct cultures (the native culture and the dominant culture of Canada) and must balance customs, values and behaviours from both cultures at once.

Bicultural Identity Integration (BII): individual differences in mental and affective organization of the two cultures. High BII individuals perceive their 2 cultures as blended and in harmony with one another (low BII individuals perceive their two cultures as compartmentalized and clashing). Higher BII is associated with greater well-being.

Bicultural Self-Efficacy (BSE): the ability to engage socially and develop relationships in both native and dominant cultures. Higher BSE is associated with greater well-being.

Goal: Investigate how much of the relationship between high bicultural identity integration (or high bicultural self-efficacy) and psychological well-being can be attributed to **socioeconomic status (SES)** and to determine which aspects of SES are most relevant.

METHOD

PARTICIPANT CRITERIA

- 403 YorkU undergraduates (Average age = 19.21 yrs; 310 women)
- Participant Criteria:
 - 18-30 years old (no diagnosed psychological impairment)
 - Canadian status of citizen or immigrant (lived in Canada for at least 4 years)

MEASURES

Biculturalism

- Bicultural Identity Integration Scale
- Bicultural Self-Efficacy Scale

Well-Being

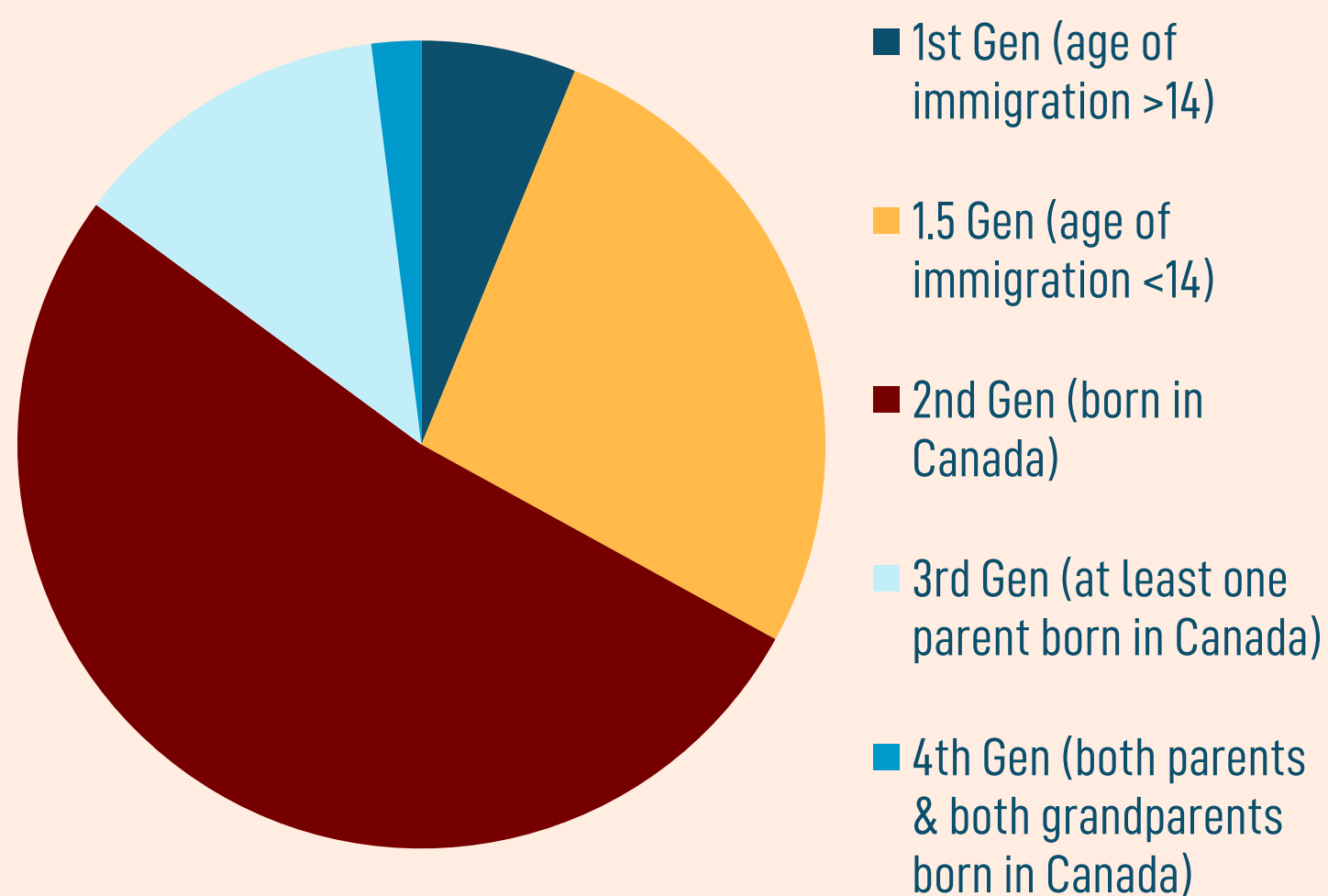
- Ryff Scales of Psychological of Well-Being
- Satisfaction with Life Scale

Socioeconomic Status

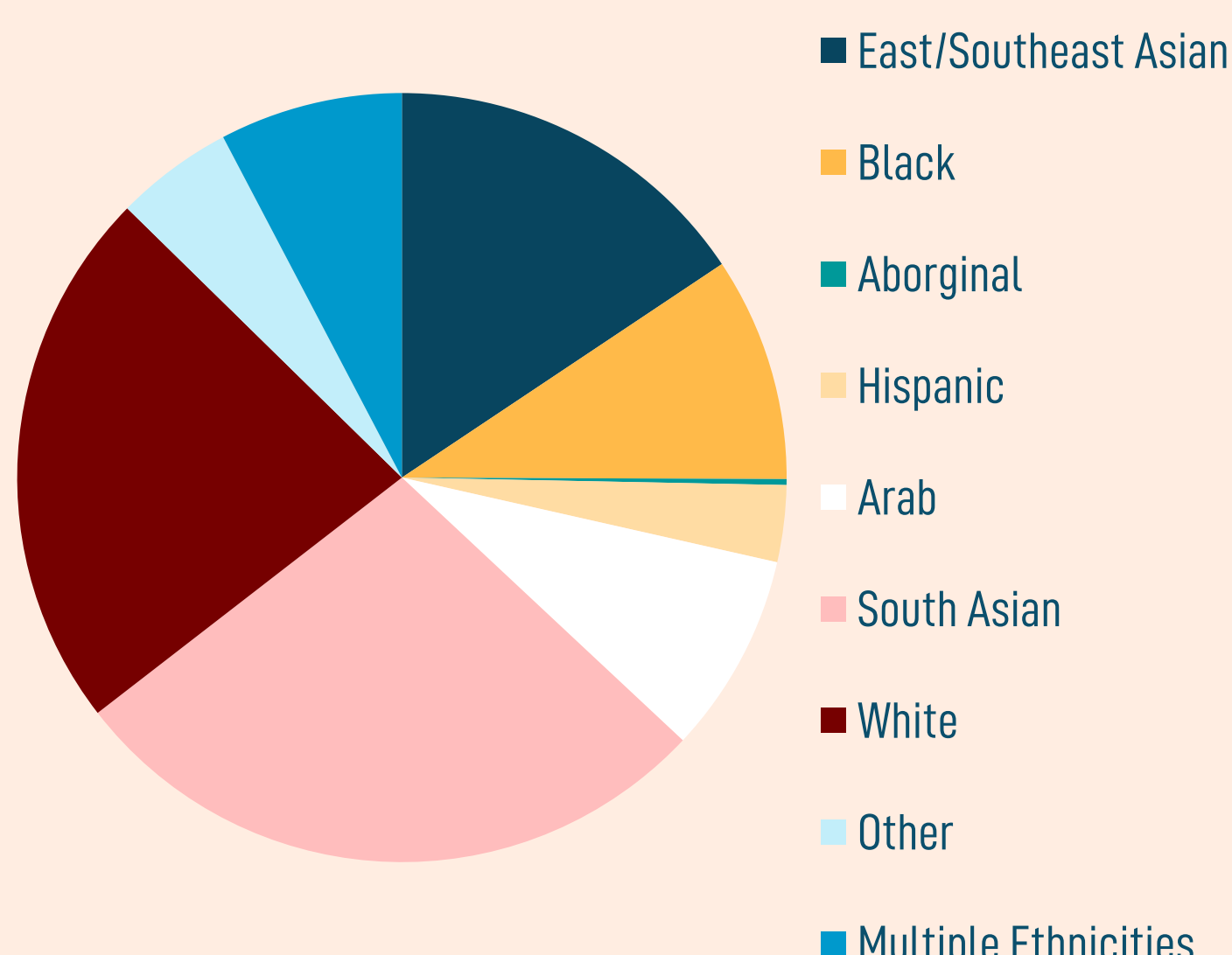
- Income, education and occupation of guardian(s)
- Financial resources
- Supports & Stressors (home, close others, friendships, school/workplace, acquaintances, health, spirituality/religion)

DEMOGRAPHICS

GENERATIONAL STATUS



ETHNICITY



RESULTS

WELL-BEING

Independent Variable(s)	R ²	R ² Change	% of Well-Being Accounted for by SES
BBC	.123**		
SES + BBC	.450**	.042**	65.85
BHC	.154**		
SES + BHC	.437**	.029**	81.17
BSE	.203**		
SES + BSE	.457**	.049**	75.86

Note. BBC = Bicultural blendedness/compartamentalization. BHC= Bicultural harmony/clash. BSE = Bicultural Self-efficacy. SES = Socioeconomic status. *p < .01 **p < .001

LIFE SATISFACTION

Independent Variable(s)	R ²	R ² Change	% of Life Satisfaction Accounted for by SES
BBC	.045**		
SES + BBC	.345**	.034**	26.67
BHC	.091**		
SES + BHC	.339**	.027*	70.33
BSE	.086**		
SES + BSE	.324**	.012*	86.05

Note. BBC = Bicultural blendedness/compartamentalization. BHC= Bicultural harmony/clash. BSE = Bicultural Self-efficacy. SES = Socioeconomic status. *p < .01 **p < .001

DISCUSSION

CONCLUSIONS

While the perception of the two cultures as being highly blended and in harmony does lead to higher wellbeing in an individual, **Socioeconomic Status (SES) is responsible for a greater change in well-being and life satisfaction.** The same result was found for bicultural self-efficacy. SES was a stronger contributor to well-being and life satisfaction than the perception of the self as being able competently function in both cultures.

Within socioeconomic status, the domains of **interpersonal relationships** and surrounding **environment** were significant contributors to these relationships, while guardians' incomes, levels of education, and occupational statuses were insignificant.

FUTURE STUDIES

Future research should continue to examine the role of socioeconomic status in biculturalism and how it relates to **variations in generational status, ethnic group and social status prior to immigration.** Research is also needed to further investigate the four domains of **psychosocial supports and stressors** (relationships, environment, health and spirituality).