Hispanic and African American student engagement at faith-based institutions and non-faith-based institutions

Laura Lynn Brown
George Fox University

This research is a product of the Doctor of Psychology (PsyD) program at George Fox University. Find out more about the program.

Recommended Citation
http://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/psyd/82
Hispanic and African American Student Engagement at Faith-Based Institutions and Non-Faith-Based Institutions

by

Laura Lynn Brown

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate Department of Clinical Psychology

George Fox University

in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Psychology

in Clinical Psychology

Newberg, Oregon

April, 2012
Hispanic and African American Student Engagement at Faith-Based Institutions and Non-Faith-Based Institutions

Laura Lynn Brown

has been approved

at the

Graduate School of Clinical Psychology

George Fox University

As a Dissertation for the Psy.D. degree

Approval

Signatures:

William Buhrow, PsyD, Chair

Date: 4/4/12

Mary Peterson, PhD

Date: 4/4/12

Winston Seegobin, PsyD

Date: 4/4/12
Hispanic and African American Student Engagement at Faith-Based Institutions and Non-Faith-Based Institutions

Laura Lynn Brown
Graduate Department of Clinical Psychology at George Fox University
Newberg, Oregon

Abstract

This study compared African American and Hispanic students’ engagement at faith-based institutions (FBIs) and non-faith-based institutions (NFBIs). Data was obtained from the 2007 National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). Benchmarks of the NSSE used in this study include Active and Collaborative Learning, Student-Faculty Interaction, and Supportive Campus Environment. Participants were 367 self-identified African American students and 336 self-identified Hispanic students. Of these students, 347 attend FBIs and 356 attend NFBIs. The results of this study show that African American and Hispanic students at FBIs generally report significantly higher levels of engagement based on Supportive Campus Environment scales, but lower levels of engagement based on Student-Faculty Interaction scales when compared with African American and Hispanic students at NFBIs. Additionally, it was found that African American students report a higher level of engagement in Active and Collaborative Learning, regardless of institution type, than do Hispanic students.
# Table of Contents

Approval Page .................................................................................................................. ii

Abstract............................................................................................................................ iii

List of Tables ...................................................................................................................... vi

Chapter 1: Introduction ...................................................................................................... 1
  Student Engagement ......................................................................................................... 2
  Cultural Fit and Student Engagement .............................................................................. 3
  Minority Engagement in College ..................................................................................... 4

Chapter 2: Method .............................................................................................................. 7
  Instruments ....................................................................................................................... 7
  Participants ....................................................................................................................... 7
  Procedure ......................................................................................................................... 8

Chapter 3: Results ............................................................................................................. 9
  Active and Collaborative Learning .................................................................................. 9
  Student-Faculty Interaction ............................................................................................ 10
  Supportive Campus Environment ..................................................................................... 11

Chapter 4: Discussion ..................................................................................................... 14
  Summary ......................................................................................................................... 16
  Limitations ...................................................................................................................... 17
  Suggestions for Future Research ..................................................................................... 19

References ....................................................................................................................... 20

Appendix A  Benchmarks of the NSSE Used ................................................................... 25
List of Tables

Table 1  Active and Collaborative Learning ................................................................. 10
Table 2  Student-Faculty Interaction ............................................................................. 11
Table 3  Supportive Campus Environment ..................................................................... 12
Chapter 1

Introduction

A college education is accessible to more people today than ever before. Many in our society have come to realize that a high school diploma alone makes attaining a livable wage difficult. Therefore, in our culture, there is an ever-increasing emphasis on high school graduates to continue their education (Kuh, Kinzie, Cruce, Shoup, & Gonyea, 2007). As universities adjust to this larger number of students, and with the increased emphasis on graduation rates, investment in student retention and success are becoming increasingly important (Hossler, 2000). Of particular interest are the retention and success rates of ethnic minority students. With Hispanic students being the largest growing segment of the college-going population, research on their experience and success rates is increasing (Hurtado et al., 1999) and African American college students’ experiences and retention rates continue to be a source of considerable research (Laird et al., 2007).

Studies show student engagement predicts retention and success in college (Astin, 1993; Chickering & Gameson, 1987; Kuh 2001), but to date, no one has yet compared the engagement of Hispanic students and African American students at faith-based institutions (FBIs) with those at non-faith-based institutions (NFBIs).
Student Engagement

Student engagement has been shown to predict success and retention at colleges across the United States (Astin, 1993; Chickering & Gamson, 1987; Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, & Whitt, 2005; Kuh, 2001; NSSE 2000, 2003; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005). Student engagement is defined as the participation of students in educationally purposeful activities (Kezar & Kinzie, 2006; Kuh, 2001; Laird, Bridges, Morelon-Quainoo, Williams, & Holmes, 2004; NSSE, 2001). One instrument that is commonly used to assess student engagement at colleges and universities in the United States and Canada is the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). Created in 1998, this instrument provides comprehensive data on educational practices divided into five benchmarks: (a) Academic Challenge, which measures levels of student achievement by setting high expectations for student performance; (b) Student-Faculty Interactions, which measures how much students interact with faculty in and outside of class; (c) Active and Collaborative Learning, which focuses on how much students are actively participating in their own learning experience and get involved in activities that are relative to real word problems; (d) Enriching Educational Experiences, which includes complementary learning opportunities inside and outside of the classroom that augment the academic program; and (e) Supportive Campus Environment, which measures how much students perceive the quality of their relationships on campus, and academic and non-academic support (Kuh, 2001; National Survey of Student Engagement [NSSE], 2001). These benchmarks were designed using systematic empirical studies of student learning experiences and behaviors to ensure consistency in what “engagement” was measuring (NSSE, 2009).
Student engagement is also a key topic in institutional ratings and rankings. Historically, rankings have been focused on programs, post-graduate success, sports, financial contributions, and so on. However, these rankings gave little regard to student experience and involvement (Hossler, 2000). Experience and involvement, along with personal and cognitive development, appears to contribute to increased retention of students and student success, which are major goals for institutions (Astin, 1993; Kuh, 2001, 2003; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Pike, 2003). Kuh et al. (2007) found that student engagement increases the likelihood of retention and positively affects the overall college experience and grades. They, along with others, have found this to be especially true for ethnic minority and historically underserved populations (Cruise, Wolniak, Seifert, & Pascarella, 2006; Kuh et al., 2007).

**Cultural Fit and Student Engagement**

Student engagement in educationally purposeful activities largely depends on individual desire and motivation; however, cultural norms and institution type also affect engagement (Laird, Bridges, Morelon-Quainoo, Holmes, & Williams, 2007). Cultural congruity is a term used by Moran, Lang, and Oliver (2007) meaning how well a person’s individual belief system fits with the majority worldview within their environment. Students attending colleges that primarily reflect their own personal values and beliefs show a higher level of engagement (Chickering, & Reisser, 1993; Gonyea, & Kuh 2006; Laird et al., 2007; Pascarella & Seifert, 2008).

In addition, research on student’s engagement at FBIs found that those who participate in spirituality-enhancing activities are more likely to also engage in other educationally beneficial activities (Gonyea & Kuh, 2006; Kuh & Gonyea, 2005). Kuh and Gonyea (2006) found that
students who have frequent engagement in spirituality-enhancing activities report a more positive college experience in a variety of ways; these students engage more often in cultural events, exercise more, party less, and spend more time on extracurricular activities.

Spiritual activities such as worship, prayer, and meditation are shown to increase personal and social development (Kuh & Gonyea, 2006). In addition, ethnic minority students are more likely to participate in spirituality-enhancing activities than majority culture students in faith-based institutions (Kuh & Gonyea, 2005; Gonyea & Kuh, 2006). Students at FBIs who identify with the faith as part of their culture report a positive “community” climate that encourages engagement (Gonyea & Kuh, 2006). Kuh and Gonyea (2005) found that students at institutions where they feel their social needs are supported, such as a deepening sense of spirituality, report greater gains in all measures of engagement. They also found that students at FBIs experience a more homogeneous environment, and engagement for these students is higher in spiritual activities (Kuh & Gonyea, 2005).

Unfortunately, several studies have shown that both ethnic minority students and Christian students often feel disconnected at predominantly Caucasian NFBIs (Laird et al., 2004; Moran et al., 2007). This research also found that Christian students at liberal colleges felt dissatisfied and oppressed. These students reported feeling out-voiced, misunderstood, and as if they were a minority group (Laird et al., 2004; Moran et al., 2007).

**Minority Engagement in College**

Studies show ethnic minority students are more engaged if they attend an institution that fits their cultural identity (Laird et al., 2004; Laird et al., 2007). These studies found African American students are less engaged in Predominantly White Institutions (PWI) than those
attending Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU; Fleming, 1984; Laird et al., 2004; Laird et al., 2007). African American students report more Student-Faculty Interaction, and were more involved in learning activities at HBCUs, such as career planning and grade discussions with faculty, and working with faculty outside of the classroom (Laird et al., 2007). These studies also show African American students feel the HBCU campuses provide better academic quality and more support than their PWI counterparts.

Hispanic students also report less engagement at PWIs compared to Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSI) in the areas of Active and Collaborative Learning, Supportive Campus Environment, and gains in overall development (Laird et al., 2007).

Studies consistently show ethnic minority students feel fragmented and disjointed at PWIs (Allen, Epps, & Haniff, 1991; Fleming, 1984; Parham, 1989; Sedlacek, 1987). These students report difficulty in their ability to engage in complex thinking and to consider multiple perspectives at PWIs, where the diversity levels may have been intentionally increased, but the racial climate has not been addressed (Hurtado, Milem, Clayton-Pederson, & Allen, 1999). Ethnic minority students also report feeling isolated and alienated at PWIs (Astin, 1975).

Furthermore, minority-serving institutions (MSIs) have been shown to provide a more nurturing learning environment than PWIs for their students (Bridges, Cambridge, Kuh, Hawthorne Leegwater, 2005).

In MSIs, ethnic minority students report identity integration and spirituality as factors that facilitate a more positive learning environment. A few studies have found identity integration and wholeness as key components for ethnic minority students pursuing a college degree (Luttrell, 1996; Stewart, 2002). Studies also show ethnic minority students rely on
spirituality as a means to keep their racial identity positive in a hostile environment and persevere successfully through the college experience (Fleming, 1984; Hughes, 1987; Sedlacek, 1987).

Therefore, it stands to reason that ethnic minority students of the Christian faith may feel more connected at FBIs. Because Christian students of an ethnic minority ethnic group are expected to experience a greater cultural fit at faith-based institutions, one would expect them to engage more. Thus, this study compares the level of student engagement of Hispanic and African American students at faith-based institutions with those attending non-faith-based institutions to see if students experience a more congruent fit between their spirituality and university culture and report greater levels of engagement. Given the research mentioned above, it is anticipated that Hispanic and African American students at faith-based institutions will report higher levels of engagement than their counterparts at non-faith-based institutions.
Chapter 2

Method

Instruments

The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) 2007 data were used for this study. This annual survey collects information from nearly 1,400 colleges and universities. First-year and senior students are surveyed about their undergraduate experience. The survey measures students’ participation in activities of effective educational practices, which are empirically shown to increase academic and personal development, student satisfaction in the college experience, and likelihood of graduating. Colleges and universities, along with researchers, routinely use this data to improve accountability and practices (NSSE, 2009).

Research shows the NSSE to have a test-retest reliability of .83 (Kuh et al., 2001). Self-reports have been shown to have high validity (Pike, 1995), and Kuh (2004) empirically shows that the NSSE is both valid and credible.

Participants

A total of 367,318 students participated in the 2007 NSSE survey. Of these, 8,965 were from Canadian institutions, and the rest were from institutions within the United States. Ninety-eight percent of the students responded to the survey online. From this data set, four sub-samples were randomly selected for this study. The first consisted of Hispanic students attending faith-based institutions (n = 173); the second included Hispanic students attending non-faith-based institutions (n = 163); the third included African American students attending faith-based
institutions \((n = 183)\); and the fourth included African American students attending non-faith-based institutions \((n = 184)\). Of the students, 27.9\% were male and 72.1\% were female; 50\% were first year students and 50\% were seniors; 27 faith-based institutions that were members of the Counsel of Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU) in 2007 were used. The institutions used in the non-faith-based group were purposefully restricted by enrollment size to fewer than 5,000; this was done in order to control for major differences in enrollment size between the FBI and NFBI universities chosen.

**Procedure**

The NSSE possesses several subscales. This study utilized three subscales: (a) Active and Collaborative Learning, which focuses on how much students are actively participating in their own learning experience and get involved in activities that are relative to real world problems; (b) Student-Faculty Interactions, which measures how much students interact with faculty in and outside of class; and (c) Supportive Campus Environment, which measures how much students perceive the quality of their relationships on campus, and academic and non-academic support (see Appendix A). These specific subscales were chosen because their focus on students’ engagement in effective educational practices. These are also the three of five subscales used in past studies in which cultural fit was the focus (Laird et al., 2004). For each of the scales listed, a two-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to explore how the students’ ratings differed based on ethnicity or type of institution.
Chapter 3

Results

This study explored the levels of engagement in Active and Collaborative Learning, Student-Faculty Interaction, and Supportive Campus Environment for African American and Hispanic students at faith-based and non-faith-based universities.

Active and Collaborative Learning

Active and Collaborative Learning measures how actively involved students are in their own learning by engaging in activities that encourage learning through real world problems. Table 1 presents the mean and standard deviations for African American and Hispanic students at non-faith-based and faith-based institutions for Active and Collaborative Learning.

A 2x2 ANOVA was used to assess whether ethnicity and type of institution significantly affected the students’ rating of Active and Collaborative Learning. The data analysis suggests that the assumptions of the ANOVA were met; specifically, the distributions were not skewed and their variances were equivalent, Levene’s $F(3, 699) = 1.67, p = 0.17$. The ANOVA revealed that the level of Active and Collaborative Learning endorsed by students did significantly differ as a function of ethnicity ($F(1, 699) = 5.72, p = 0.02$). Specifically, African American students reported higher levels of engagement in their own learning and engaged in activities that encourage learning through real world problems more than Hispanic students reported, regardless of type of school. Despite the fact that there was a significant difference, however, the
effect size was small (Cohens d = 0.18). There was no significant difference between students attending faith-based and non-faith-based institutions \((F(1,699) = 0.56, p = 0.45)\) and there was no interaction of ethnicity and institution type \((F(1,699) = 0.37, p = 0.54)\).

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race or Ethnicity</th>
<th>Institution Type</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>Non faith-based</td>
<td>52.15</td>
<td>15.44</td>
<td>184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Faith-based</td>
<td>50.43</td>
<td>16.27</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>51.29</td>
<td>15.86</td>
<td>367</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>Non faith-based</td>
<td>48.35</td>
<td>18.61</td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Faith-based</td>
<td>48.17</td>
<td>16.86</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>48.26</td>
<td>17.70</td>
<td>336</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Non faith-based</td>
<td>50.36</td>
<td>17.08</td>
<td>347</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Faith-based</td>
<td>49.33</td>
<td>16.57</td>
<td>356</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>49.84</td>
<td>16.82</td>
<td>703</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Student-Faculty Interaction**

Student-Faculty Interaction measures the frequency and level of interactions between faculty and students inside and outside of class. Table 2 presents the means and standard deviations for African American and Hispanic students at non-faith-based and faith-based institutions for Student-Faculty Interaction.

A 2x2 ANOVA was used to assess whether ethnicity and type of institution significantly affected students’ ratings of Student-Faculty Interaction. The data analysis suggests that the assumptions of the ANOVA were met; specifically, the distributions were not skewed and their variances were equivalent, Levene’s \(F(3, 699) = 2.42, p = 0.07\). The ANOVA revealed that
Student-Faculty Interaction did not differ as a function of ethnicity \((F(1,699) = 0.42, p = 0.52)\) thus, African American students did not report significant differences in quality and/or frequency of faculty interaction when compared to the Hispanic students. While there was a significant difference for type of institution \((F(1,699) = 22.2, p = 0.00)\), this difference was opposite of what prior literature suggests and this study’s hypotheses. Students reported significantly higher levels of faculty-student interaction at non-faith-based institutions than faith-based institutions. The effect size of the difference is small \((\text{Cohen’s } d = 0.36)\). There was no interaction of ethnicity and institution type \((F(1,699) = 3.68, p = 0.06)\).

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race or Ethnicity</th>
<th>Institution Type</th>
<th>(M)</th>
<th>(SD)</th>
<th>(n)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>Not faith-based</td>
<td>44.23</td>
<td>19.13</td>
<td>184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Faith-based</td>
<td>34.34</td>
<td>18.53</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>39.30</td>
<td>19.45</td>
<td>367</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>Not faith-based</td>
<td>42.33</td>
<td>21.88</td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Faith-based</td>
<td>38.16</td>
<td>19.61</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>40.19</td>
<td>20.82</td>
<td>336</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Not faith-based</td>
<td>43.34</td>
<td>20.46</td>
<td>347</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Faith-based</td>
<td>36.20</td>
<td>19.13</td>
<td>356</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>39.72</td>
<td>20.10</td>
<td>703</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Supportive Campus Environment

Supportive Campus Environment measures students’ perceptions of the support they receive, both academic and non-academic and the quality of their relationships with faculty. Table 3 presents the results of the mean and standard deviation comparisons for African
American and Hispanic students at non-faith-based and faith-based institutions for the benchmark Supportive Campus Environment.

### Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race or Ethnicity</th>
<th>Institution type</th>
<th>$M$</th>
<th>$SD$</th>
<th>$n$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>Not faith-based</td>
<td>63.88</td>
<td>19.75</td>
<td>184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Faith-based</td>
<td>66.06</td>
<td>18.04</td>
<td>182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>64.96</td>
<td>18.92</td>
<td>366</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>Not faith-based</td>
<td>61.84</td>
<td>19.02</td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Faith-based</td>
<td>65.97</td>
<td>18.02</td>
<td>172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>63.96</td>
<td>18.60</td>
<td>335</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Not faith-based</td>
<td>62.92</td>
<td>19.41</td>
<td>347</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Faith-based</td>
<td>66.02</td>
<td>18.00</td>
<td>354</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>64.48</td>
<td>18.76</td>
<td>701</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A 2x2 ANOVA was used to assess whether ethnicity and type of institution affected the ratings of Supportive Campus Environment. The data analysis suggests that the assumptions of the ANOVA were met; specifically, the distributions were not skewed and their variances were equivalent. Levene’s $F(3, 697) = 0.57, p = 0.64$. The ANOVA revealed that the responses of students did not differ as a function of ethnicity, meaning African American students and Hispanic students perceive about the same level of support and quality of relationships with faculty ($F(1,697) = 0.56, p = 0.45$). There was, however, a main effect for type of institution. Both African American and Hispanic students report experiencing a significantly more supportive environment at faith-based universities than non-faith-based universities, ($F(1,697) = 4.96, p = .03$). However, despite the finding of a significant difference the effect size is small
(Cohens $d = 0.16$), suggesting only a small actual difference. There was no interaction of ethnicity and institution type ($F(1,697) = 0.48, p = 0.49$).

In summary, the first research question explored the effects of ethnicity and institution type on Active and Collaborative Learning. Results showed African American students reported significantly higher levels of engagement in their own learning than Hispanic students regardless of type of institution. The second research question explored the effects of ethnicity and institution type on students’ perception of Student-Faculty Interaction. Contrary to expectations, results showed that students at non-faith-based universities reported higher levels of Student-Faculty Interaction than their counterparts at faith-based universities. The third and final research question explored whether students at faith-based universities would report experiencing a more supportive environment than students at non-faith-based universities. Results showed students, regardless of ethnicity, reported high levels of support in faith-based universities.
Chapter 4

Discussion

Student engagement has been shown to increase the likelihood of retention and positively affect the overall college experience and grades, therefore it is a vital component for universities to focus and improve on. This research compared the differences of engagement levels between African American and Hispanic students who attended faith-based versus non-faith-based universities as measured by Supportive Campus Environment, Student-Faculty Interaction, and Active and Collaborative Learning scales of the NSSE.

Research consistently shows students whose beliefs and values are congruent with that of the institution they attend will report higher levels of engagement (Laird et al., 2004; Laird et al., 2007). Therefore, this study hypothesized that African American and Hispanic students would report higher levels of engagement at FBIs compared to NFBIs since their faith would be a major component in their cultural fit.

Consistent with our hypotheses, both African American and Hispanic students who attended faith-based universities reported significantly higher levels in Supportive Campus Environment than did students at non-faith-based universities. It makes sense that the subscale of Supportive Campus Environment, defined as measuring the levels of how much students perceive the quality of their relationships on campus, and academic and non-academic support, would be increased at an institution where personal beliefs and values, such as religious faith, are
congruent with that of the student’s. This is also consistent with literature, as studies show students who attend a university where their individual belief system fits with the majority worldview and in an atmosphere that primarily serves within their own values and beliefs are more likely to feel supported and engage at a higher level (Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Gonyea & Kuh, 2006; Laird et al., 2007; Pascarella et al., 2008). Therefore, it was expected that African American and Hispanic students at FBIs would report higher levels of engagement resulting in higher retention levels, better grades, and a more positive overall college experience than NFBIs for African American and Hispanic students.

Contrary to this study’s hypotheses, students at FBIs reported lower levels of Student-Faculty Interaction than at NFBIs, regardless of ethnicity. While this is contrary to prior research, prior research may not have been restricted to small private institutions. If prior research looked at all NFBIs as a group, it seems reasonable that less student faculty interaction would occur at large universities. However, when comparing two different types of small private institutions, NFBIs might have higher reported levels of student-faculty interactions than FBIs.

Another possible explanation for this finding may be related to expectations. Research shows students at faith-based universities experience a more homogeneous environment (Kuh & Gonyea, 2005). This homogeneous environment may include a naturally higher level of student-faculty interaction. Therefore, it could be hypothesized that the perceptions of Student-Faculty Interaction levels at FBIs may simply reflect their expectations. Therefore, underreporting may occur in that the students at FBIs rated student faculty interaction as sometimes instead of often or very often because they expected a high level of interaction.
Also, ethnic minority students may have difficulty connecting with majority white faculty members. Statistics show FBIs typically have about one-third less ethnic minority faculty members as NFBIs (Reyes & Case, 2011). This may explain the results of this benchmark in this study.

In exploring the third variable, Active and Collaborative Learning, students did not report any significant differences between faith-based universities and non-faith-based universities. However, African American students reported significantly higher levels than Hispanics, regardless of type of university. Research shows African American students typically report higher levels of participation in spirituality-enhancing activities than other ethnic groups, which have been shown to affect levels of engagement in educationally purposeful activities and desired outcomes of college (Kuh & Gonyea, 2005). This research may generalize over to the Active and Collaborative Learning engagement levels and explain why African American students are experiencing a more active participation in their own learning and tend to get more involved in activities that are relative to real world problems.

Summary

Based on prior research, African American and Hispanic students at faith-based universities were expected to experience a more congruent fit and thus report higher levels of engagement than their counterparts at non-faith-based universities due to the cultural climate that supports their world-views and belief systems.

The results of this study support the hypothesis in that African American and Hispanic students reported a more Supportive Campus Environment at faith-based universities compared to their counterparts at non-faith-based universities. This was expected since research shows
students who attend institutions where their own personal beliefs and worldview values are congruent engage more (Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Gonyea & Kuh 2006; Laird et al., 2007; Pascarella et al., 2008).

However, exploration of these other two subscales of engagement did not support this hypothesis. The findings that African American and Hispanic students report higher levels of Student-Faculty Interaction at non-faith-based universities may be due to underreporting by students attending faith-based universities based on student’s expectations. The other subscale that did not support the hypothesis was Active and Collaborative Learning. African American students reported significantly higher levels of engagement, regardless of institution type, than did Hispanic students. Certain research may support this in that African American students have been previously shown to engage in more extracurricular activities than other students (Kuh & Gonyea, 2005).

Limitations

In assessing the generalizability of the results, several limitations in this study should be considered with respect to the findings and interpretations. First, consideration must be given to the fact that the effect sizes of all the findings were small. Although significant differences were detected in two of the three subscales, the Cohen’s d ranged between .18 and .36. The significant findings might be due, in part, to the large sample size. However it may also be attributed to an actual and significant difference whose practical implications are relatively small.

The second consideration involves the criteria used for the two institution type categories. The data pool used for the FBI category, were selected from a list of universities who participated in the 2007 NSSE, and are also currently members of the CCCU. In selecting
schools that are members of the CCCU, this study is assuming they are somewhat homogeneous. However, the focus on faith within each institution may be varied. The CCCU describes itself as an international association of intentionally Christian colleges and universities whose mission is “to advance the cause of Christ-centered higher education and to help our institutions transform lives by faithfully relating scholarship and service to Biblical truth”. It can be argued that the institutions within this membership body may not be completely homogeneous in their belief and value systems. Faith-based universities may actually have differences in the way in which they express their faith statements, mottos, culture, lifestyle expectations, and environments. Thus, assuming that this is a unified and similar group of universities should not be done. It is assumed they follow the basic themes and requirements of the CCCU, but there are many differences in how these schools operate and thus engage with their students. Some of the institutions may reflect a more secular atmosphere and would therefore produce results similar to the NFBI data pool.

Finally, the data pool used for the non-faith-based universities was randomly selected from a specific group of universities with limited population size of 5,000 or less in order to match the faith-based university data pool as closely as possible. Catholic and Jesuit colleges and universities were excluded from this group. This group may be a varied selection of private and public universities. It may also be argued there are vast differences in the engagement subscales based on whether a school is private or public. All of the FBIs are private. Public schools included in the NFBI group may confound the assumed similarity between the two groups of NFBIs and FBIs. It would be expected that levels of engagement would differ at public schools and private schools.
Suggestions for Future Research

Suggestions for future research are as follows: First, this study could be replicated with more stringent definitions of what defines a FBI and NFBI by selecting only: (a) FBIs whose mission statements include similar and congruent belief and value systems, (b) NFBIs that are private institutions of similar enrollment size, and (c) institutions that have similar minority student ratios.

Secondly, further research may focus on how the results of the NSSE affect the way FBIs utilize their faith beliefs as cultural support with ethnic minority students. Are schools using the results to better their retention and success rates of ethnic minorities in their institutions? The way institutions interact, support, and encourage African American and Hispanic students in their faith may be the focus of future studies.

Lastly, future studies might explore the expectations African American and Hispanic students have in levels of engagement at either institution type. This research could help both faith-based and non-faith-based universities to better understand student’s expectations and therefore improve the methods utilized to encourage students to engage.
References


Kuh, G. D., Kinzie, J., Cruce, T., Shoup, R., & Gonyea, R. M., (2007). Connecting the dots: Multi-Faceted analyses of the relationships between student engagement results from the NSSE, and the institutional practices and conditions that foster student success; Center for Postsecondary Research, Indiana University, Bloomington.


National Survey of Student Engagement. (2003). *Converting data into action: Expanding the boundaries of institutional improvement*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research, Author.


Appendix A

Benchmarks of the NSSE Used
Items used:

Active and Collaborative Learning:

1. Asked questions in class or contributed to class discussions
2. Made a class presentation
3. Worked with students on projects during class
4. Worked with classmates outside of class to prepare class assignments
5. Tutored or taught other students (paid or voluntary)
6. Participated in a community-based project as part of a regular course
7. Discussed ideas from your readings or classes outside of class

Student-Faculty Interaction

1. Discussed grades or assignments with an instructor
2. Talked about career plans with a faculty member or advisor
3. Discussed ideas from you readings or classes with faculty members outside of class
4. Received prompt feedback from faculty on your academic performance
5. Worked with faculty on activities other than coursework.

Supportive Campus Environment

1. Provided the support needed to succeed academically
2. Helping cope with non-academic responsibilities (work, family etc.)
3. Providing support you need to thrive socially
4. Your relationships with other students
5. Your relationships with faculty members
6. Your relationships with administrative personnel and offices

Scale: Very Often, Often, Sometimes, Never
Appendix B

Curriculum Vita
LAURA BROWN

413 South Second St. PO Box 623, Silverton, Oregon

(503) 559-0155 lhelmer07@georgefox.edu

EDUCATION

George Fox University, Newberg, Oregon, 2008 - Present
  Graduate Department of Clinical Psychology: APA accredited
  Master’s in Clinical Psychology May 2010
  Doctorate expected May 2013

George Fox University, Salem, Oregon, 2007 - 2008
  Graduate Department of School Counseling

Willamette University, Salem, Oregon, graduated - 2002
  BA in Psychology

SUPERVISED CLINICAL EXPERIENCE

George Fox Department of Clinical Psychology, Newberg, OR
  Title: Pre-practicum Student Dates: January-April 2009
  Supervisors: Clark Campbell, PhD and Ryan Thompson, MA

  Responsibilities consisted of weekly Rogerian style psychotherapy for two George Fox University volunteer undergraduate students. This supervised experience included intake interviews, writing and conducting treatment plans, and termination. In this experience I worked with a Latina college freshman dealing with an acculturation struggle of fitting in with her new peer group and maintaining her family role expectations. I also worked with an adopted Dominican Republic native college pre-med junior working through meeting her biological family and their expectations.

St. Paul School District, St. Paul, OR
  Title: Practicum Student Psychologist, Elementary and High School
  September 2009 - June 2010
  Supervisor: Elizabeth Hamilton, PhD

  The St. Paul School District is in a rural community with a large low SES population including many farm labor providing families. Responsibilities consisted of providing short-term cognitive behavior therapy including relaxation techniques, self-talk, scheduling, and reinforcement schedules; and long-term psychodynamic psychotherapy
Student Engagement

including social and study skills, reframing, and processing. In my first month at the site I provided crisis management dealing with peer altercation and anger management that continued throughout the year. I was a consultation and liaison with both school staff and families. I conducted learning disability and ADHD assessments, which resulted in IEP’s and meetings with staff and families. I also conducted personality and psychopathological assessments that included testing, report writing, treatment plans, consultation, and psychotherapy. I taught a study skills class, a coping skills class for high-risk teens, and assisted in teaching the high school Intro to Psychology class. In particular I worked with a sexual abuse victim who was currently living in an abusive foster home. She was dissociating during school and suicidal.

Willamette Family Medical Center, Salem, OR
Title: Practicum Student Psychologist
Supervisor: Charity Benham, PsyD
August 2010 – June 2011

Willamette Family Medical Center is non-profit medical facility that provides services to over 30,000 patients regardless of language barriers or their inability to pay. I contributed a significant amount of program development and consultation since this was only their second year providing mental and behavioral health services. With a staff of over 50 physicians, nurses, medical specialists, and staff, I had the opportunity to work in a collaborative system. I provided services with 73 diverse clients, which included short-term CBT, long-term dynamic, crisis intervention, multiple comprehensive assessments, play therapy, group therapy, couples and family therapy, and suicidality assessments. At this site I had the opportunity to utilize translators for non-English speaking and deaf clients in therapy. I worked with varied levels of psychopathology and worked along side physicians and nurse practitioners to provide integrative health care from both a physical and mental stance.

George Fox University, Health and Counseling Center, Newberg, OR
Title: Practicum Student Psychologist, (paid practicum)
Management position, Counselor
Supervisor: William Buhrow, Jr., PsyD
August 2011 – present

In my current practicum at George Fox University Health and Counseling Center I was selected as manager and this is a paid practicum site. I have had the opportunity to work with a diverse university population in an integrated health care/counseling setting providing learning disability assessments with comprehensive reports and feedback sessions; short-term CBT Solution Focused case conceptualization, treatment planning, and therapy; client screening and scheduling; practicum student consultation and scheduling; didactic presentations and training; crisis intervention; issues of depression, eating disorders, anxiety, suicidality, social skill building, study skills building, time management, homesickness, identity issues, abuse and forgiveness, and religious issues.
WORK EXPERIENCE

Willamette Valley Christian School, Brooks, OR
Title: High School and Jr. High School Teacher
September 2003 – September 2007
WVCS is a private Christian school grades Kindergarten through high school. I taught History, Spanish, Geography, Government, and Contemporary Issues. In addition, I chaired the 2004 annual school auction, which included procuring donations and organizing volunteers. I also led the 2006 high school Washington D.C. trip and the 2007 Mexico Missions trip, which included multiple fundraisers, planning, and chaperoning the travel.

Silver Falls School District
Title: Substitute Teacher, K – 12
September 2002 to June 2003
September 2007 to June 2008
I was a preferred substitute at several schools and constantly requested by teachers and administrators particularly because of my skills working with junior high students, classroom management abilities and my flexibility in teaching a broad range of subjects.

Double H Western Stores, Salem, OR
Title: Human Resource Manager/Office Manager/Accessories Manager/Sales/purchasing/inventory
1986 – 1997
In our family business I worked in many facets, but most significantly I wrote our first employee manual and updated it several times. I attended seminars on ethics, liability, employee motivation, and management. I acted as mediator with employee altercations, and complaints.

INTERNSHIP:

For Willamette University, BA in Psychology
Waldo Middle School, Salem, OR
School Counseling Intern
January 2002 – April 2002
At this inner-city low SES middle school comprised of a large Latina/o population, I assisted with school counseling duties including scheduling, general counseling, dress code and behavior issues. I facilitated mediations between students, and worked in the Emotional Growth Center, which consisted of students who were unable to succeed in a regular classroom.
VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

Multicultural Committee
    George Fox University

Western Horsemen of Oregon
    Junior Director
    Secretary

George Fox University Serve Days
    Juliette’s House – Fall clean-up

Willamette Valley Christian School
    Mission to Mexico trip

RESEARCH

Dissertation
    Level of Engagement of African American and Latina/o students at Faith-Based Universities and Non-Faith-Based Universities. My study uses the National Survey of Student Engagement to measure the level of engagement on 3 benchmark clusters. My hypothesis states that students of color will be more engaged at faith-based universities as a result of their faith being a major part of their culture. I have the data collected and I am in the process of completing the final two chapters. My goal is to defend my dissertation by January of 2012.


Boredom, Intelligence, and Behavior Issues
    Examined middle school students’ perceptions of boredom and correlations with behavioral issues, along with teachers perception of students’ intelligence and academic ability. Research conducted as part of training at George Fox Graduate Department of School Counseling.

Self-Efficacy of Jr. High Students
    Examining the effects of a structured study skills course on the reported self-efficacy, using standardized questionnaire, and corresponding academic performance of Jr. High students in a rural setting.

Coping And Support Training Study
    Examining the effects of the a 5-week abbreviated evidenced-based protocol,
Coping and Support Training (CAST) on corresponding behavior, health, sleep, and pain standardized questionnaires of Jr. High students in a rural setting.

REFERENCES

Elizabeth Hamilton, PhD
Graduate Department of Clinical Psychology
George Fox University, Faculty
414 North Meridian
Newberg, OR 97132
(503) 554-2370
Ehamilton@georgefox.edu

William Buhrow, PhD
Research Vertical Team, Leader
Graduate Department of Clinical Psychology
George Fox University
414 North Meridian
Newberg, OR 97132
(503) 554-2370
bbuhrow@georgefox.edu

Charity Benham, PsyD
Willamette Family Medical Center
Practicum Supervisor
627 Winter Street NE
Salem, OR 97304
(503) 550-7139
charity@drcharitybenham.com