

An Examination of Family Cohesion and Self-Esteem as Mediators of Bilingualism and Reading Achievement in Second-Generation Immigrant Students

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Introduction

- Over a third of second-generation immigrants report having an academic degree (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010)
- Second-generation American students are born in the U.S., but have at least one parent born outside of the U.S. (RTI International, 2016)
- Level of bilingualism impacts LatinX students' reading comprehension and reading vocabulary (Cremer & Schoonen, 2013)
- Family cohesion and self-esteem might contribute to reading achievement of students (Addes, 1989)

Rationale

This study is important for ELAR teachers in high school who are in charge of preparing students for college readiness and 2 year and 4 year institutions of higher education who serve second generation Hispanic students who come from a bilingual literate home. Reading skills and strategies are important for comprehension and an extensive vocabulary are needed for academic success if students are expected to thrive in college.

Method

Participants

This study included 2,107 second-generation Latinx participants enrolled in 8th and 9th grade. The sample included 51.4% females and 48.6% males. The median age was 14. The average grade point average was 2.30. The majority (71.5%) indicated being U.S. citizens and 99% reported speaking Spanish at home.

Procedure

Latinx students completed a cross-sectional questionnaire in public and private schools in Florida and California.

Measures

- Family Cohesion
- Self-Esteem
- Bilingual Dominance
- Stanford Reading Achievement (SAT-10)
 - Reading Vocabulary
 - Reading Comprehension

Hypotheses & Results

- **H1: Bilingual dominance positively relates to reading achievement.**
- A hierarchical multiple regression demonstrated that bilingual dominance positively related to English reading score achievement, after controlling for sex, age, grade-level, U.S. stay length, and citizenship.



- **H2: Family cohesion and self-esteem mediate the positive relationship between bilingual dominance and reading achievement.**
- A multiple mediation analysis using bootstrap sampling with 5,000 samples revealed that both family cohesion and self-esteem mediated the positive relationship between bilingualism and reading score.

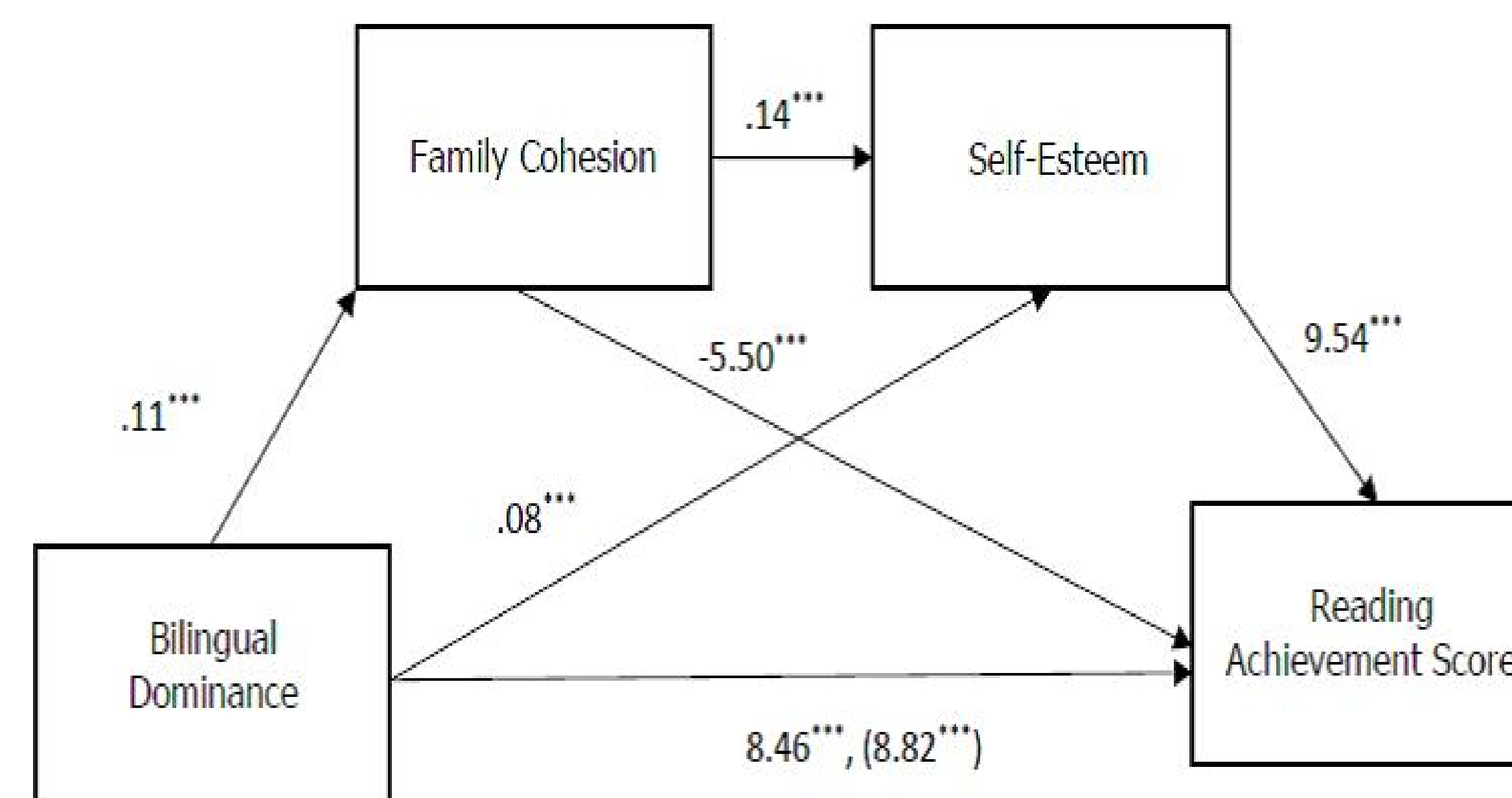


Figure 1. Multiple Mediation Pathway Model
Note: ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$

Discussion & Implications

The results suggest that a student's level of bilingualism, self esteem, and family cohesion are predictors of their reading ability. For students that struggle with reading, they will continue to struggle if they are not provided with the necessary skills or interventions needed to become successful with the rigorous reading demands of higher education.

It is recommended that teachers who work with students in high school who struggle with reading, need to provide them with the skills and strategies required to become better readers. This will benefit them when they enter an institution of higher education.

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