



# Cultural Adaptation of Hispanics in a Digital Era

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# Problem:

- Study of how a fast-growing and important segment of the Hispanic population – aspiring professionals who are currently in college – use the Internet as a mechanism for acculturation.



# The Study:



- A survey of Hispanic students (U.S.-born and non-U.S. born) at the University of Oklahoma that explores the relationships among:
  - Acculturation
  - Internet media dependencies
  - Internet connectedness
  - Demographics and socioeconomics

# Literature:



## 1. Acculturation:

- “Fluid process in which an individual picks up certain traits from a new culture, but maintains others from his native culture” Faura (2004)
- *Bidimensional Model*: Integration / Assimilation

## 2. Media System Dependency Theory:

- Understanding: Self and Social
  - Orientation: Action and Interaction
  - Play: Solitary and Social
- DeFleur and Ball-Rokeach (1989)

## 3. Internet Connectedness:

“A multilevel and contextual way of envisioning the relationship between individuals and technology”  
Jung, Qiu and Kim (2001)

## 4. U.S. Hispanics’ Access and Usage of The Computer and The Internet:

- Digital divide
- Research gap

# Research Questions:

**RQ1:** What are the levels of acculturation of the U.S. Hispanic college students? And are there differences between the U.S-born and non-U.S. born Hispanic college students?

**RQ2:** What are the Oklahoma's Hispanic college students Internet dependencies?

**RQ3:** What are the patterns of Internet usage of Oklahoma's Hispanic college students?

**RQ4:** Is there a relationship between Oklahoma's Hispanic college students Internet dependencies, Internet usage patterns and their acculturation levels?

# Methods:

## Population and Sampling:

- The University of Oklahoma's U.S. born Hispanic and non-U.S. born Hispanic students (1146 total, 978 U.S.-born, 168 non-U.S. born)

## Research Technique:

- Online survey (Winter 2007)

### 1. Acculturation Measures:

- Bidimensional scale derived from **ARSMA-II** (Acculturation Rating Scale for Mexican Americans-II) Cuéllar, Arnold, & Maldonado (1995)
- 30 statements scale: Very Hispanic to very Anglo oriented
- **BAS** (Bidimensional Acculturation Scale for Hispanics) Marín, & Gamba (1996)

### 2. Media Dependency Measures:

- Media dependency goals scale Ball-Rokeach, Rokeach, & Grube (1989)
- 16 statements scale: Internet dependency goals

### 3. Internet Connectedness Measures:

- Internet Connectedness Index Jung, Qiu, & Kim (2001)
- 20 statements scale: computer & Internet history, Internet usage patterns

# Methods:

<b>CONSTRUCTS</b>		
<b>ARSMA-II</b>	<b>Internet Goals Dependency Scale</b>	<b>Internet Connectedness Index</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Ethnic self perception</li><li>• Family ethnic self-perception</li><li>•Family traditions</li><li>•Language usage</li><li>•Language proficiency</li><li>•Media consumption</li><li>•Social networks</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Understanding</li><li>•Orientation</li><li>•Play</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Computer history</li><li>•Internet history</li><li>•Usage frequency and duration</li><li>•Site of connection</li><li>•Internet tasks</li><li>•Internet activities</li></ul>

# Results:

## Response Rate:

- 19.54% response rate (13% U.S.-born 58% non-U.S. born)

## Acculturation:

- U.S.-born Hispanics are “slightly Anglo oriented”
- Non-U.S. born Hispanics are more Hispanic oriented
- Non-U.S. born are less acculturated than U.S.-born
- Both groups have bicultural self perceptions

# Results:

## Media Dependencies:

- Different degrees of mid-level Internet dependencies
- In general, moderately strong understanding and play dependencies, moderate orientation dependencies
- Strong self & social focuses: social understanding and self orientation
- Non-U.S. born depend more on the Internet than U.S.-born
- Non-U.S. born have stronger social understanding and self orientation dependencies than U.S.-born (not play)

# Results:

## Internet Connectedness:

- Average time of personal computer ownership at home: 9 years
- Average time of Internet access at home: 6 years and 4 months
- Main connection places: Home, school and work (not community or commercial centers)
- Least frequent online activity: game playing
- Average time of daily Internet usage: 6 hours and 38 minutes:  
Non-U.S. born (7 hrs 40 min) / U.S.-born (5 hrs. & 20 min)
- 11.60% visit “Face book” or “My Space” 1 hr. per day

# Results:

## **Partial Correlations among Acculturation, Internet Dependencies and Internet Usage Patterns**

*(After controlling for: Education, U.S. Generation, Family Income, Gender, Age and Place of Birth):*

- Acculturation is negatively correlated to orientation and understanding dependencies:  
Less acculturated students depend more in the Internet for action (self) orientation and social understanding goals
- Acculturation is negatively correlated to Internet connectedness:  
Less acculturated students use more the Internet for bulletin board, news groups, chat rooms, online shopping, information research and e-mailing

## ADDITIONAL FINDINGS

### Bi-variant Correlations between the students' demographics and their Acculturation, Internet Dependencies and Internet Usage Patterns

U.S.-born	Non-U.S. born
Enrolled in lower education levels	Enrolled in higher education levels
2nd, 3rd, 4th or 5th U.S. family generations	1st U.S. family generations
Parents have higher annual household income	Parents have lower annual household income
Parent's have lower education levels	Parent's have higher education levels
Mostly females	Mostly males
Younger	Older
Read more Web Pages in English	Read more Web Pages in Spanish
More acculturated	Less acculturated
Have lower action orientation and social understanding dependencies, and somewhat higher play dependencies	Have higher action orientation and social understanding dependencies and very low play dependencies
Have lower Internet connectedness	Have higher Internet connectedness

# Discussion:

- Low Internet access and usage is not an issue (not affected by the digital divide)
- The Internet is used more by the less acculturated Hispanic students as a tool for cultural adaptation to understand the world around them and to orient their actions in a new culture
- By researching the students' demographics and socio-economics, their Internet dependencies and Internet connectedness, their acculturation needs can be predicted





# Practical Implications:

- U.S. Hispanics students should be addressed by Web Page creators as savvy Internet users
- Web Pages creators that target these Hispanics should produce online content based on their Internet usage patterns, Internet dependencies and socio-demographics:

- Events and news about their new communities (*Soc. Und.*)
- National and international news (*Soc. Und.*)
- Specialized professional information (*Act. Orient.*)
- Directories and practical suggestions for every day tasks (*Act. Orient.*)
- Targeted information of product and services that aids them in their everyday purchasing decisions (*Act. Orient.*)
- Age-based content (older=social understanding and action orientation / younger = moderate play)
- **Content in both languages (English/ Spanish)**
- Enhance communication processes between U.S. Hispanics and their friends and family in the U.S. and in their countries of origin

# Conclusion:

U.S. aspiring professional Hispanics are heavy Internet users whose acculturation needs and wants can be addressed through tailored WebPages that satisfy their Internet understanding and orientation dependencies.



# Questions?

