

# Exploring Resilience in College Students

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# Abstract

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Resilience is the process of adapting to adversity, tragedy, trauma, threats, and other sources of stress. First-generation college students are students whose parents did not complete a four-year college degree. First-generation college students were hypothesized to have higher levels of resilience and depression than non-first-generation students. Analysis showed that there was no statistical significance between the two groups in depression, resilience, and spirituality. A shared pandemic experience or the fact that most first-generation college students were enrolled in a program that was specifically designed to support them in their experiences may have eliminated differences between first-generation and non-first-generation college students.

# Who are first-generation (FG) college students?

- Students whose parents did not complete a four-year college degree
- Comprised 56% of incoming undergraduates nationally
- Have fewer financial resources
  - \$41k median parental income vs \$90k

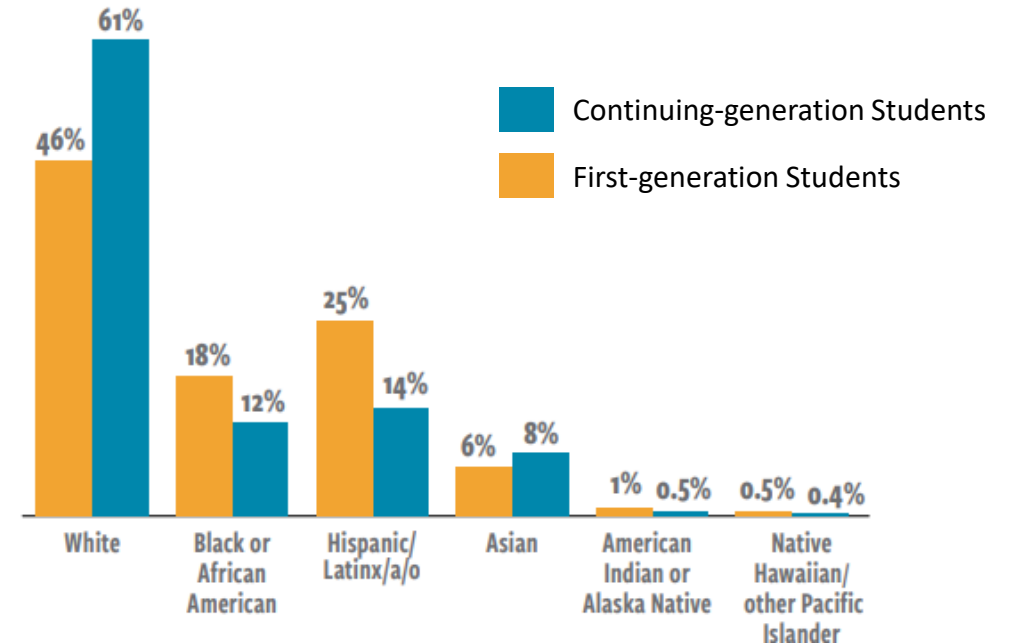
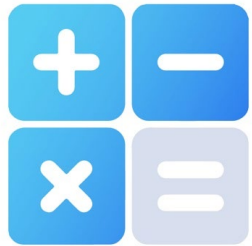


Figure 1: Distribution of race of first-generation and continuing-generation college students during the academic year 2015-2016.

# Who are FG college students?

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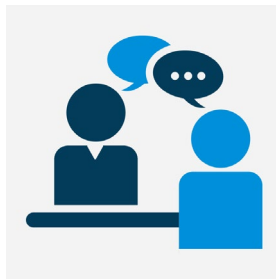
More FG college students used financial services

- 65% vs 49%



Fewer FG college students used academic support services

- 30% vs 37%



Fewer FG college students used academic advising services

- 55% vs 72%



FG college students drop out at twice the rate

# Defining Resilience

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- The process of adapting to adversity, tragedy, trauma, threats, and other sources of stress that include health problems, family and relationship problems, and financial trouble
- Resiliency is both innate and learned

# Purpose & Hypothesis

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- Compare levels of resilience and depression between non-first-generation and first-generation college students
- Describe relationship between spirituality, resilience, and depression among college students

## Hypothesis:

First-generation college students would have higher levels of resilience and depression than non-first-generation college students

# Study Design

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- Sample: College students participating in a Psychology 101 class or enrolled in First To Go Program/First To Go Scholars Program at Loyola Marymount University
- Sample Time: November 2021 – March 2022
- Students either received research credit or gift card for participating
- Cross sectional study
- 30-minute questionnaire that included:
  - Beck's Depression Inventory-II
  - Resilience Scale for Adults
  - Spirituality Index of Well Being
  - Rosenberg's Self Esteem Scale
  - Daily Spirituality Experience Scale



# Participant Demographics



N = 152 college students

Table 1: Participant breakdown by gender and generation

Gender	Male	Female	Non-Binary
	45 (29.6%)	101 (66.4%)	6 (3.95%)
First-Generation	Yes	No	
	40 (26.3%)	112 (73.7%)	

75% of first-generation students were enrolled in First To Go Scholars Program

Race/Ethnicity

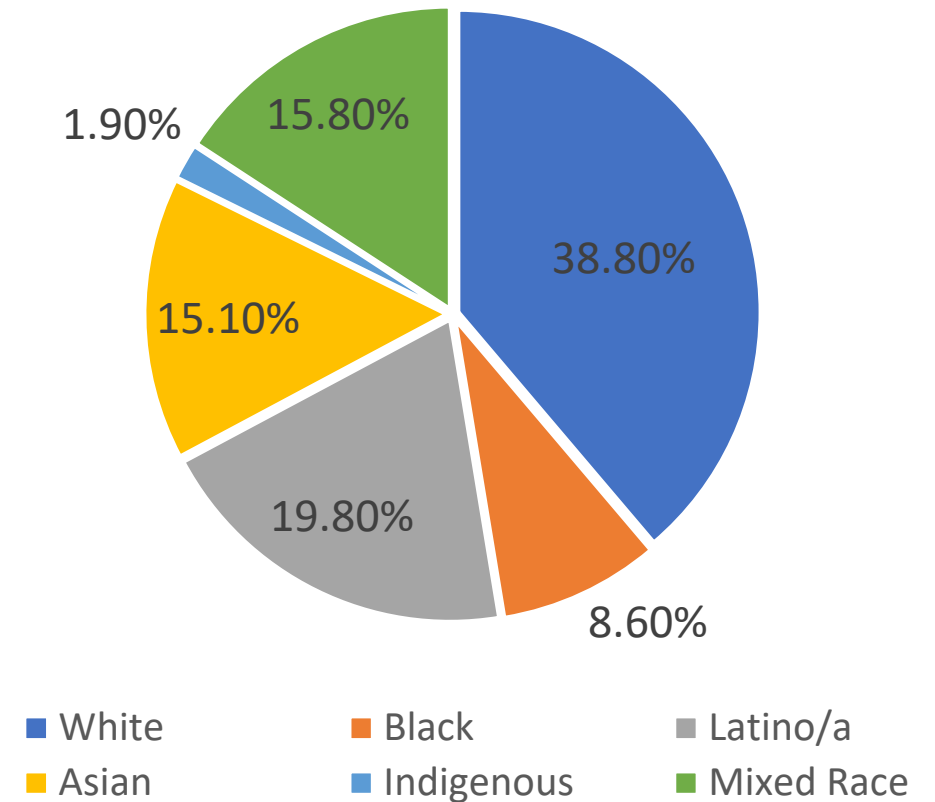


Figure 1: Participant breakdown by race/ethnicity



# No statistically significant difference in levels of resilience and depression among FG and non-FG college students

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Table 2: Comparison between first-generation and non-first-generation students

Variable	Non-FG	FG	P-value
Sample size (152)	112 (73.7%)	40 (26.3%)	-
Depression mean score	14.3	17.6	.531
Resilience mean score	103.1	105.5	.307
Spirituality mean score	61.2	57.1	.532

About 24-30% of LMU students reported moderate to severe levels of depression

# Higher levels of resilience associated with lower levels of depression

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Table 3: Correlations between measures

	Spirituality	Self-Esteem	Resilience	Self-Efficacy	Depression
Spirituality	-	.206*	-.373**	.234**	.250**
Self-Esteem	-	-	-.067	.109	-.067
Resilience	-	-	-	.394**	-.653**
Self-Efficacy	-	-	-	-	-.294**
Depression	-	-	-	-	-

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

# Discussion

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- Hypothesized differences overshadowed by shared pandemic experience
- Most first-generation students were enrolled in a program that is specifically designed to support them in their experiences
- **Limitations:** Self-report nature of surveys, limited subject pool
- **Future Direction:** Compare strategies, resources, and graduation rates for programs supporting first-generation college students between private and public schools

# Acknowledgments

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