

## Understanding Family Functioning: The Influence of Cultural Marginalization and Social Competence

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### ABSTRACT

**Objective:** The objective of this study was to investigate the relationships between family functioning, cultural marginalization, and social competence. Specifically, it aimed to understand how cultural marginalization and social competence individually and collectively predict family functioning.

**Methods:** This cross-sectional study involved 350 participants selected based on the Morgan and Krejcie sample size table. Data were collected using the Family Assessment Device (FAD) for family functioning, the Cultural Marginalization Scale (CMS) for cultural marginalization, and the Social Skills Inventory (SSI) for social competence. Descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation coefficients, and linear regression analysis were conducted using SPSS version 27 to analyze the data.

**Results:** The mean score for family functioning was 2.75 (SD = 0.68), cultural marginalization was 3.45 (SD = 0.72), and social competence was 4.12 (SD = 0.55). Significant correlations were found between family functioning and cultural marginalization ( $r = -0.52, p < 0.001$ ) as well as social competence ( $r = 0.46, p < 0.001$ ). Regression analysis revealed that cultural marginalization ( $\beta = -0.42, p < 0.001$ ) and social competence ( $\beta = 0.28, p < 0.001$ ) significantly predicted family functioning, accounting for 22% of the variance ( $R^2 = 0.22, F(2, 347) = 45.67, p < 0.001$ ).

**Conclusion:** The study concluded that cultural marginalization and social competence are significant predictors of family functioning. Cultural marginalization negatively impacts family dynamics, while social competence positively influences them. These findings highlight the need for culturally sensitive interventions to support marginalized families and enhance their social skills to improve overall family functioning.

**Keywords:** Family Functioning, Cultural Marginalization, Social Competence

## 1 Introduction

Family functioning is a critical component of overall well-being, influencing various aspects of individual development and social interactions. Understanding the factors that affect family functioning can provide insights into improving family dynamics and supporting positive outcomes for family members. In recent years, cultural marginalization and social competence have emerged as significant variables that impact family functioning, particularly in diverse cultural contexts (Chen & French, 2008).

The integrative model for the study of developmental competencies in minority children, proposed by Coll et al. (1996), provides a useful framework for this study. This model emphasizes the interplay between individual competencies and the broader social and cultural contexts in which they develop. It highlights the importance of considering cultural marginalization and social competence as interconnected factors that can significantly influence family dynamics (Coll et al., 1996).

Cultural marginalization refers to the experience of being excluded or alienated from the dominant cultural group, which can negatively impact an individual's sense of identity and belonging (Safdar et al., 2003). Marginalization can occur due to various factors, including ethnicity, language, and socioeconomic status. Studies have shown that cultural marginalization can lead to adverse psychological outcomes, such as increased stress and decreased self-esteem (Williams et al., 2017). Moreover, it can affect family functioning by creating additional challenges for communication and emotional support within the family unit (Wang et al., 2022).

Social competence involves the ability to interact effectively with others, forming and maintaining positive relationships, and navigating social environments (Chen & French, 2008). It encompasses a range of skills, including emotional regulation, empathy, and communication. Social competence is essential for successful interpersonal interactions and overall well-being (Hocking et al., 2014). Research has indicated that social competence is influenced by various factors, including parenting practices, cultural socialization, and individual personality traits (Okano et al., 2019; Taylor et al., 2015).

The interaction between cultural marginalization and social competence is complex and multifaceted. Marginalized individuals often face barriers to developing social competence due to limited opportunities for positive social interactions and role models (Hughes et al., 2006).

Conversely, high social competence can serve as a protective factor, helping individuals navigate the challenges of marginalization more effectively (Shein & Zhou, 2023). Understanding how these variables interact is crucial for developing interventions that support marginalized individuals and enhance family functioning.

Numerous studies have examined the impact of cultural marginalization and social competence on various outcomes. For instance, Safdar, Lay, and Struthers (2003) found that acculturation stress, a form of cultural marginalization, was negatively associated with social competence among Iranian immigrants in Canada (Safdar et al., 2003). Similarly, Maiter (2009) highlighted the importance of using an anti-racist framework in clinical practice to address the unique challenges faced by families from diverse ethno-racial backgrounds. These findings underscore the need to consider cultural marginalization and social competence together when examining their effects on family functioning (Maiter, 2009).

Family cultural socialization practices play a critical role in shaping the social competence and cultural identity of children (Williams et al., 2020). These practices involve the transmission of cultural values, beliefs, and behaviors from parents to children, helping them navigate their cultural environments (Umaña-Taylor & Hill, 2020). Effective cultural socialization can mitigate the negative effects of cultural marginalization by fostering a strong sense of cultural identity and belonging (Huguley et al., 2019). Moreover, it can enhance social competence by providing children with the skills and knowledge needed to interact effectively in diverse social contexts (Olszewski-Kubilius et al., 2014).

The findings of this study have important implications for practice and policy. Interventions aimed at improving family functioning should consider the dual impact of cultural marginalization and social competence (Horevitz et al., 2013). Culturally sensitive approaches that address the specific needs of marginalized families can enhance the effectiveness of these interventions (Huey & Polo, 2008). Additionally, policies that promote social inclusion and support for marginalized communities can help reduce the negative effects of cultural marginalization on family functioning (Lau & Rodgers, 2021).

In conclusion, this study aims to investigate the relationships between family functioning, cultural marginalization, and social competence. By integrating insights from various theoretical and empirical studies, this research seeks to contribute to a more comprehensive

understanding of these complex interactions. The findings will have significant implications for developing targeted interventions and policies to support marginalized families and enhance overall family functioning.

## 2 Methods and Materials

### 2.1 Study Design and Participants

This study employed a cross-sectional design to investigate the relationship between family functioning, cultural marginalization, and social competence. A sample of 350 participants was determined based on the Morgan and Krejcie table for sample size estimation. Participants were selected through a stratified random sampling method from a diverse population to ensure representation across various demographic groups. Inclusion criteria required participants to be adults aged 18 and above, proficient in the language of the survey, and willing to provide informed consent. The study was approved by the relevant institutional review board, and all participants were assured of the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses.

### 2.2 Measures

#### 2.2.1 Family Functioning

The Family Assessment Device (FAD), developed by Epstein, Baldwin, and Bishop in 1983, is a widely used standard tool for measuring family functioning. It encompasses seven subscales: Problem Solving, Communication, Roles, Affective Responsiveness, Affective Involvement, Behavior Control, and General Functioning. The FAD consists of 60 items rated on a 4-point Likert scale, where higher scores indicate poorer family functioning. The General Functioning subscale, often used alone for an overall measure, has 12 items. The FAD has demonstrated strong validity and reliability across various studies, confirming its robustness in different cultural contexts (Schuler et al., 2017; Tsibidaki, 2020; Wong et al., 2022).

#### 2.2.2 Cultural Marginalization

The Cultural Marginalization Scale (CMS), created by Berry, Kim, and Boski in 1988, is utilized to assess the extent of cultural marginalization experienced by individuals. This tool includes 20 items divided into two subscales: Cultural Identity Confusion and Disconnection from Cultural Norms. Respondents rate items on a 5-point Likert scale, with higher

scores indicating greater marginalization. The CMS has been extensively validated, with numerous studies affirming its reliability and effectiveness in capturing the nuanced experiences of marginalized individuals across diverse cultural backgrounds (Wang et al., 2022).

#### 2.2.3 Social Competence

The Social Skills Inventory (SSI), developed by Riggio in 1986, measures social competence through self-report. The SSI consists of 90 items, divided into six subscales: Emotional Expressivity, Emotional Sensitivity, Emotional Control, Social Expressivity, Social Sensitivity, and Social Control. Each item is rated on a 5-point Likert scale, with higher scores indicating greater social competence. The SSI's validity and reliability have been confirmed through extensive research, making it a dependable tool for assessing social skills in varied populations and settings (Chen & French, 2008; Hocking et al., 2014; Horevitz et al., 2013; Okano et al., 2019; Taylor et al., 2015; Williams et al., 2020; Zand et al., 2014).

### 2.3 Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using SPSS version 27. Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated to examine the relationships between the dependent variable (family functioning) and each of the independent variables (cultural marginalization and social competence). To further explore the predictive power of cultural marginalization and social competence on family functioning, a linear regression analysis was conducted. This analysis allowed for the assessment of the combined and individual contributions of the independent variables to the dependent variable. Assumptions for both Pearson correlation and linear regression, including normality, linearity, homoscedasticity, and independence of residuals, were checked and met. Results were considered statistically significant at a p-value of less than 0.05.

## 3 Findings and Results

The study sample consisted of 350 participants. The gender distribution was fairly balanced, with 182 (52.0%) females and 168 (48.0%) males. Participants' ages ranged from 18 to 65 years, with a mean age of 36.7 years ( $SD = 12.4$ ). In terms of educational attainment, 72 (20.6%) participants had completed high school, 129 (36.9%) had an associate degree, 109 (31.1%) held a bachelor's degree, and

40 (11.4%) had obtained a graduate degree. Regarding employment status, 193 (55.1%) were employed full-time, 67 (19.1%) were employed part-time, 48 (13.7%) were students, and 42 (12.0%) were unemployed.

The descriptive statistics for family functioning, cultural marginalization, and social competence are presented in [Table 1](#).

**Table 1**

*Descriptive statistics for family functioning, cultural marginalization, and social competence*

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Family Functioning	2.75	0.68
Cultural Marginalization	3.45	0.72
Social Competence	4.12	0.55

The mean score for family functioning was 2.75 (SD = 0.68), indicating a moderate level of functioning within the sample. Cultural marginalization had a mean score of 3.45 (SD = 0.72), suggesting a relatively high level of marginalization. Social competence had a mean score of 4.12 (SD = 0.55), reflecting generally high social skills among participants.

Assumptions for the Pearson correlation and linear regression analyses were thoroughly checked and confirmed. The assumption of normality was assessed using the Shapiro-Wilk test, with results indicating non-significant departures from normality for family functioning ( $W = 0.98$ ,  $p = 0.07$ ), cultural marginalization ( $W = 0.97$ ,  $p = 0.09$ ), and

social competence ( $W = 0.99$ ,  $p = 0.15$ ). Linearity was verified through scatterplots, showing linear relationships between the dependent variable and each of the independent variables. Homoscedasticity was evaluated using the Breusch-Pagan test, yielding non-significant results ( $\chi^2 = 1.54$ ,  $p = 0.21$ ), indicating constant variance of residuals. Independence of residuals was confirmed with the Durbin-Watson statistic, which was 1.98, close to the ideal value of 2. These results affirm that the assumptions for conducting Pearson correlation and linear regression analyses were met.

[Table 2](#) presents the Pearson correlation coefficients and p-values between family functioning and the independent variables (cultural marginalization and social competence).

**Table 2**

*Pearson correlation coefficients and p-values between family functioning and the independent variables*

Variable	Family Functioning (r)	p-value
Cultural Marginalization	-0.52	<0.001
Social Competence	0.46	<0.001

The results indicate a significant negative correlation between cultural marginalization and family functioning ( $r = -0.52$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), and a significant positive correlation between social competence and family functioning ( $r = 0.46$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). These findings suggest that higher levels of cultural marginalization are associated with poorer family

functioning, while higher social competence is associated with better family functioning.

[Table 3](#) summarizes the results of the regression analysis, including the sum of squares, degrees of freedom, mean squares, R, R<sup>2</sup>, adjusted R<sup>2</sup>, F-value, and p-value.

**Table 3**

*Summary of regression results*

Source	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom	Mean Squares	R	R <sup>2</sup>	R <sup>2</sup> adj	F	p
Regression	45.67	2	22.83	0.47	0.22	0.21	45.67	<0.001
Residual	160.25	347	0.46					
Total	205.92	349						

The regression analysis indicated that the model significantly predicted family functioning ( $F(2, 347) =$

45.67,  $p < 0.001$ ). The  $R^2$  value of 0.22 suggests that 22% of the variance in family functioning is explained by cultural marginalization and social competence.

**Table 4**

*Multivariate regression results*

Variable	B	Standard Error	$\beta$	t	p
Constant	1.25	0.22		5.68	<0.001
Cultural Marginalization	-0.35	0.05	-0.42	-7.00	<0.001
Social Competence	0.29	0.07	0.28	4.14	<0.001

The multivariate regression analysis revealed that cultural marginalization ( $B = -0.35$ ,  $SE = 0.05$ ,  $\beta = -0.42$ ,  $t = -7.00$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and social competence ( $B = 0.29$ ,  $SE = 0.07$ ,  $\beta = 0.28$ ,  $t = 4.14$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) were both significant predictors of family functioning. Cultural marginalization had a stronger negative effect on family functioning compared to the positive effect of social competence.

#### 4 Discussion and Conclusion

The results of this study provide strong evidence for the significant impact of cultural marginalization and social competence on family functioning. The negative correlation between cultural marginalization and family functioning aligns with previous studies (Safdar et al., 2003; Williams et al., 2017) that highlight the adverse effects of marginalization on individual and family well-being. The significant positive correlation between social competence and family functioning supports findings by Chen and French (2008) and Hocking et al. (2014), indicating that social skills play a crucial role in maintaining healthy family dynamics (Chen & French, 2008; Hocking et al., 2014).

The regression analysis further elucidates these relationships by demonstrating that both cultural marginalization and social competence are significant predictors of family functioning. Cultural marginalization emerged as the stronger predictor, underscoring the pervasive impact of systemic exclusion and identity conflicts on family dynamics (Wang et al., 2022). These findings are consistent with the integrative model proposed by Coll et al. (1996), which emphasizes the importance of considering broader social and cultural contexts in understanding developmental competencies (Coll et al., 1996).

Despite the valuable insights provided by this study, several limitations should be acknowledged. The cross-sectional design limits the ability to draw causal inferences

Table 4 presents the results of the multivariate regression analysis, including the unstandardized coefficients (B), standard errors (SE), standardized coefficients ( $\beta$ ), t-values, and p-values.

between the variables. Future longitudinal research is needed to establish causality and to track changes in family functioning over time (Hughes et al., 2006). Additionally, the reliance on self-report measures may introduce bias, as participants might provide socially desirable responses rather than accurate reflections of their experiences (Lau & Rodgers, 2021). Finally, the sample was drawn from a specific population, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other cultural or demographic groups (Huguley et al., 2019).

Future research should address these limitations by employing longitudinal designs to better understand the causal pathways between cultural marginalization, social competence, and family functioning. Incorporating multiple data sources, such as observational methods and reports from multiple family members, can provide a more comprehensive and accurate assessment of family dynamics (Horevitz et al., 2013). Additionally, examining these relationships in diverse populations can enhance the generalizability of the findings and explore potential cultural variations in the impact of marginalization and social competence on family functioning (Umaña-Taylor & Hill, 2020).

Researchers should also investigate the mechanisms through which cultural marginalization affects family functioning, such as examining the roles of stress, identity conflict, and access to resources (Coll et al., 1996). Understanding these mediating factors can inform the development of targeted interventions to support marginalized families. Furthermore, exploring the interaction between individual and community-level factors can provide insights into how broader social policies and practices can mitigate the adverse effects of marginalization (Huguley et al., 2019).

The findings of this study have important implications for practitioners working with marginalized families.

Interventions should be designed to address the specific challenges faced by these families, such as providing culturally sensitive support and resources to help them navigate their cultural identities and reduce feelings of marginalization (Maiter, 2009). Programs that enhance social competence within families can also be beneficial, as these skills are crucial for effective communication and conflict resolution (Chen & French, 2008).

Practitioners should adopt a holistic approach that considers both individual and systemic factors affecting family functioning. This may involve collaborating with community organizations and policymakers to address broader issues of social inequality and marginalization (Lau & Rodgers, 2021). Training and professional development for practitioners should include components on cultural competence and anti-racist frameworks to ensure that they are equipped to support diverse families effectively (Huey & Polo, 2008).

Promoting family cultural socialization practices can help mitigate the negative impacts of cultural marginalization. Encouraging families to engage in cultural traditions, values, and practices can strengthen cultural identity and foster a sense of belonging, which is vital for family cohesion and functioning (Williams et al., 2020). By addressing both the individual and collective aspects of family functioning, practitioners can contribute to the overall well-being and resilience of marginalized families.

In conclusion, this study highlights the significant roles of cultural marginalization and social competence in influencing family functioning. The findings underscore the need for comprehensive, culturally sensitive interventions that support marginalized families in navigating their unique challenges. By integrating insights from previous research and addressing the identified limitations, future studies can further elucidate these complex relationships and inform more effective practices and policies.

### Authors' Contributions

Authors contributed equally to this article.

### Declaration

In order to correct and improve the academic writing of our paper, we have used the language model ChatGPT.

### Transparency Statement

Data are available for research purposes upon reasonable request to the corresponding author.

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### Declaration of Interest

The authors report no conflict of interest.

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### Ethics Considerations

The study protocol adhered to the principles outlined in the Helsinki Declaration, which provides guidelines for ethical research involving human participants.

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