

# Diversity's Impact on the Undergraduate Student Experience: A Study of Chinese International and Domestic Students

October 11, 2022

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# Publication Source

Presentation based on dissertation with free access

Peczalska, A. (2021). *Diversity support, interactive diversity, and institutional satisfaction: Comparing Chinese international and domestic student experiences* (Publication No. 28717756). [Doctoral Dissertation, Indiana University]. ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global.

<https://www.proquest.com/docview/2572566992?q-origsite=gscholar&fromopenview=true>

# Overview

- ▶ Introduction
- ▶ Theoretical Foundation
- ▶ Methodology, Analysis, and Argumentation
- ▶ Conclusions
- ▶ Potential Impact
- ▶ Discussion

# Learning Outcomes

- 1) Learn how institutions can support diverse student populations through the Culturally Engaging Campus Environments model, Gurin et al. informal diversity concept, and student engagement
- 2) Assess the impact of diversity coursework and interactions with others from diverse backgrounds on a sample of U.S. undergraduate students
- 3) Practice applying findings from a research study to their institution

# Introduction

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# Culturally Engaging Coursework Definition

The extent to which students perceive that their coursework emphasized exploring their own background, acknowledging their cultural norms and biases, learning about different cultures, discussing equity or privilege issues, sharing personal perspectives and experiences, learning how to work with others from various backgrounds, and respectfully listening to diverse ideas (NSSE, n.d.).

# Interactive Diversity Definition

The study employs Gurin's (1999) definition of interactive diversity as "interactions with peers from diverse racial, ethnic, cultural, social, and economic backgrounds" (Hu & Kuh, 2003, p. 321). However, this study expands Gurin's (1999) definition to include others from different backgrounds such as faculty and staff.

# Importance of Diversity Coursework and Interactions with Diverse Others

- ▶ Help students understand and interact with other students in a diversifying student population
- ▶ Assist students in understanding and working with others from various backgrounds, including different cultures, which is crucial in today's U.S. society
- ▶ Associated with gains in students' academic and cognitive growth

Gurin et al., 2002; Hanassab, 2006; Hu & Kuh, 2003; Kim & Kim, 2010; Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009; Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2012; Walsh, 2019



# Theoretical Foundation

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# Theoretical Foundation

- ▶ Student success is a fundamental goal for U.S. higher education institutions.
- ▶ Student engagement is positively related to student belonging and perceptions of support (Glass & Westmont-Campbell, 2014; Mamiseishvili, 2012; Manning et al., 2014; Trowler, 2010; Zhao et al., 2005) which in turn promote student persistence (Kuh et al., 2008; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Trowler, 2010; Trowler & Trowler, 2010)

# Student Engagement Definition

Student engagement is a partnership between students and institutions, taking into account the institutional and student cultural context, with the aim of helping students participate in educationally enriching activities and succeed within higher education (Kuh, 2003; Trowler, 2010).

# Student Engagement Benefits

Positive relationship with student learning (Kuh et al., 2006)

More engaged students more likely to perceive that they belong, persist, and graduate from an institution

(Bean & Eaton, 2000; Kuh et al., 2006, Tinto, 1993)

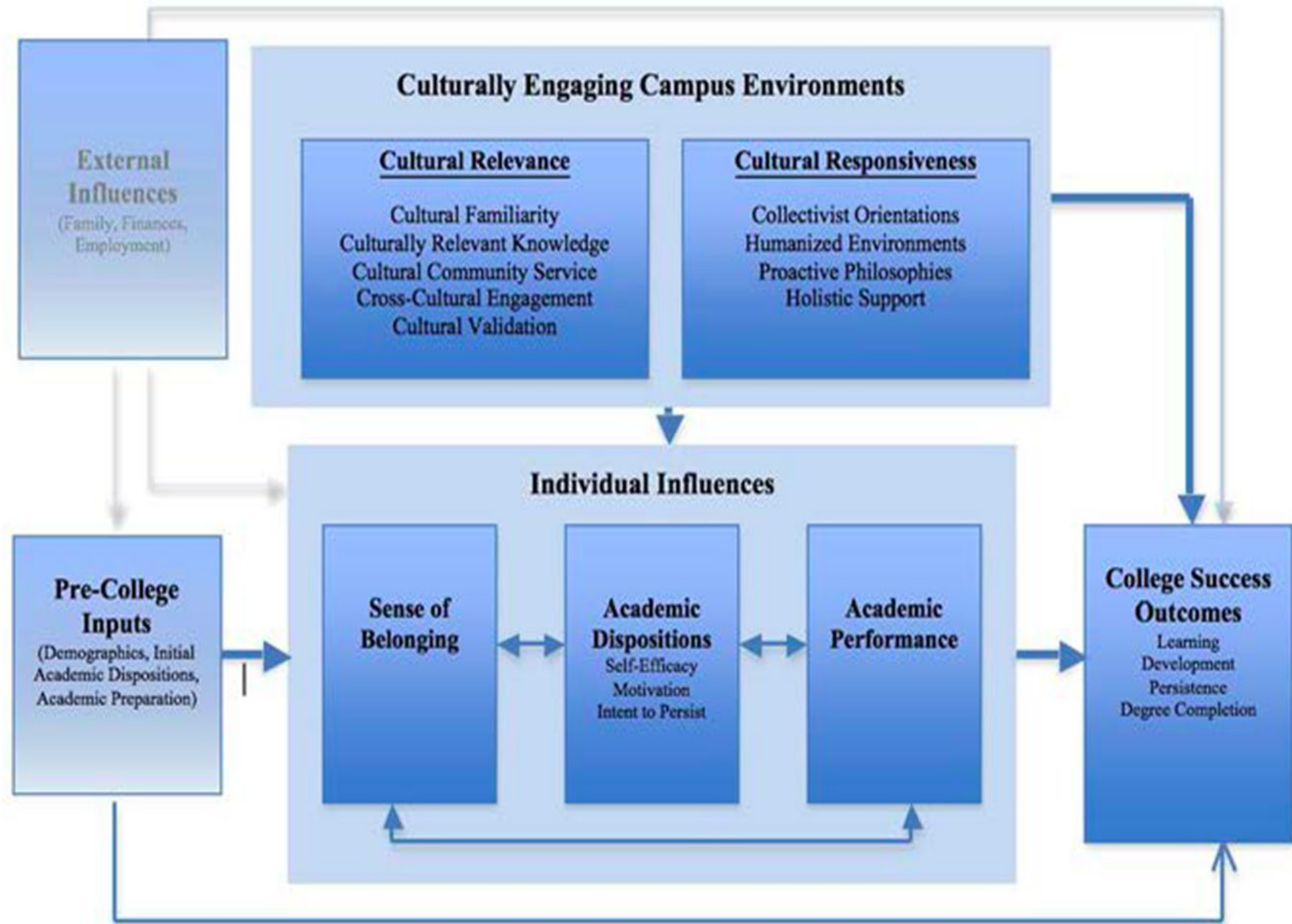
# Student Engagement Drawback

Earlier student development and student engagement theories are based on a more homogenous student population (Mayhew et al., 2016; Rendón, 1994; Rendón et al., 2000; Tierney, 1992).

# **Solution: Culturally Engaging Campus Environments (CECE) Model**

Based on recent literature and meant  
for students from all backgrounds at  
U.S. higher education institutions  
(Museus, 2014)

# Museus et al. (2017) CECE Model



# Gurin et al. Informal Interactive Diversity Concept

- ▶ Defined as intergroup interactions in a variety of settings such as informal discussions and campus events
- ▶ Assists with student identity development
- ▶ Research study shows impact on learning outcomes for all racial/ethnic groups such as active thinking, citizenship engagement, and racial/cultural engagement

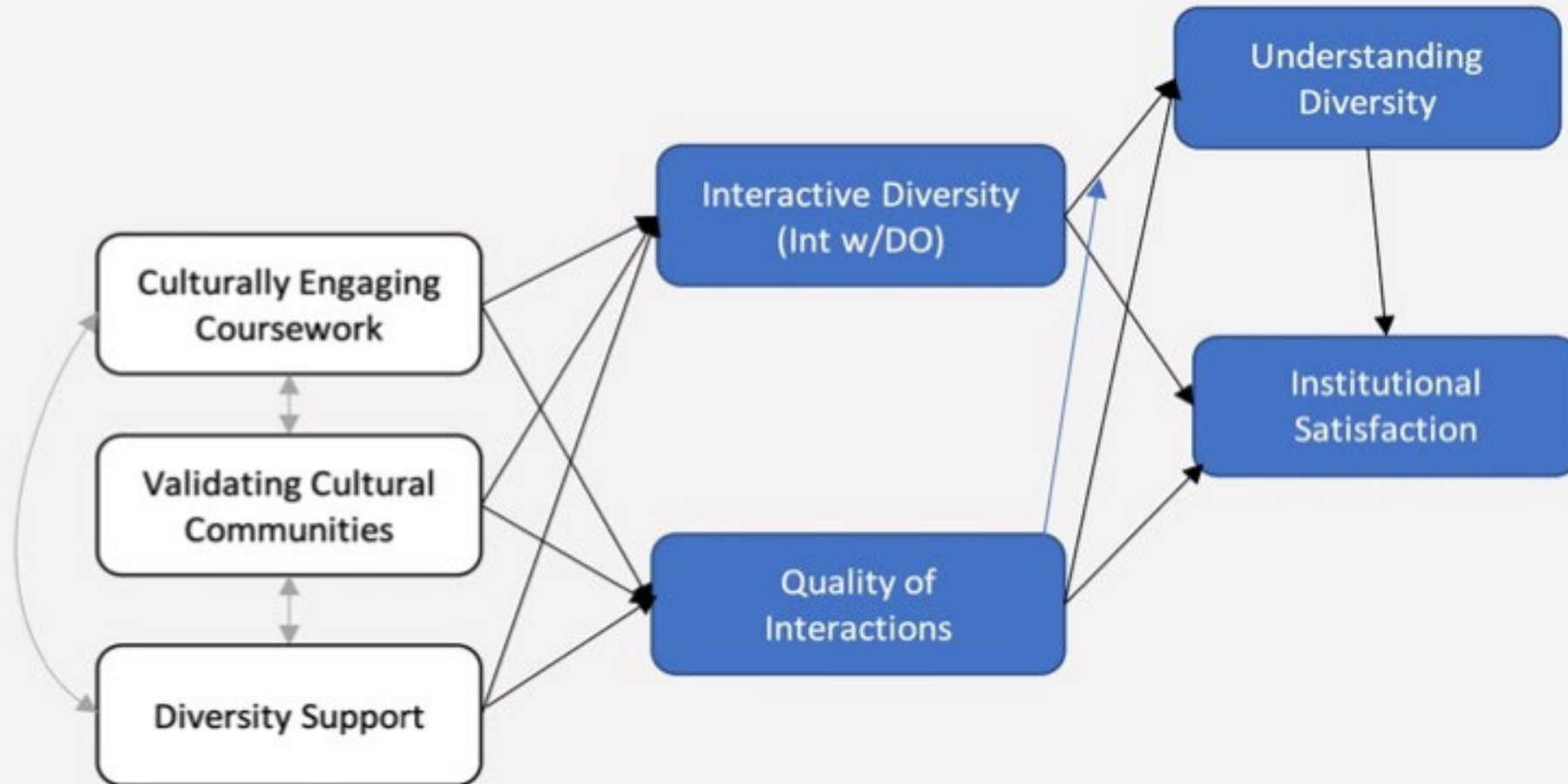
(Gurin et al., 2002)



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# **Methodology, Analysis, and Argumentation**

# CIS Interactive Diversity and Institutional Satisfaction Model



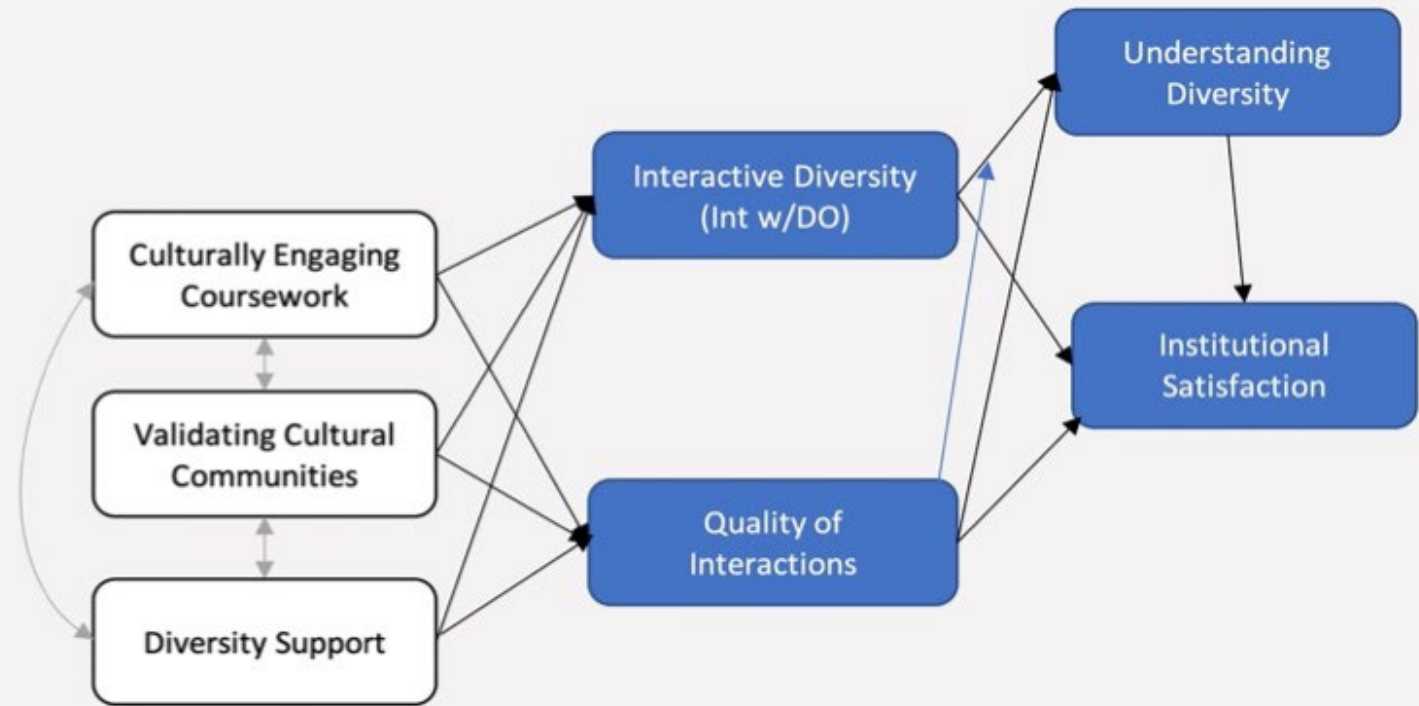
# Research Question 1

To what extent is CIS reported levels of interaction with diverse others associated with CIS reports of:

The extent to which classes they took were culturally engaging?

Their perceptions of institutional support for diverse students through programs and services (e.g., support offices, programs, and initiatives)?

How well they think their institutions express value for the diverse cultures from which its students originate?



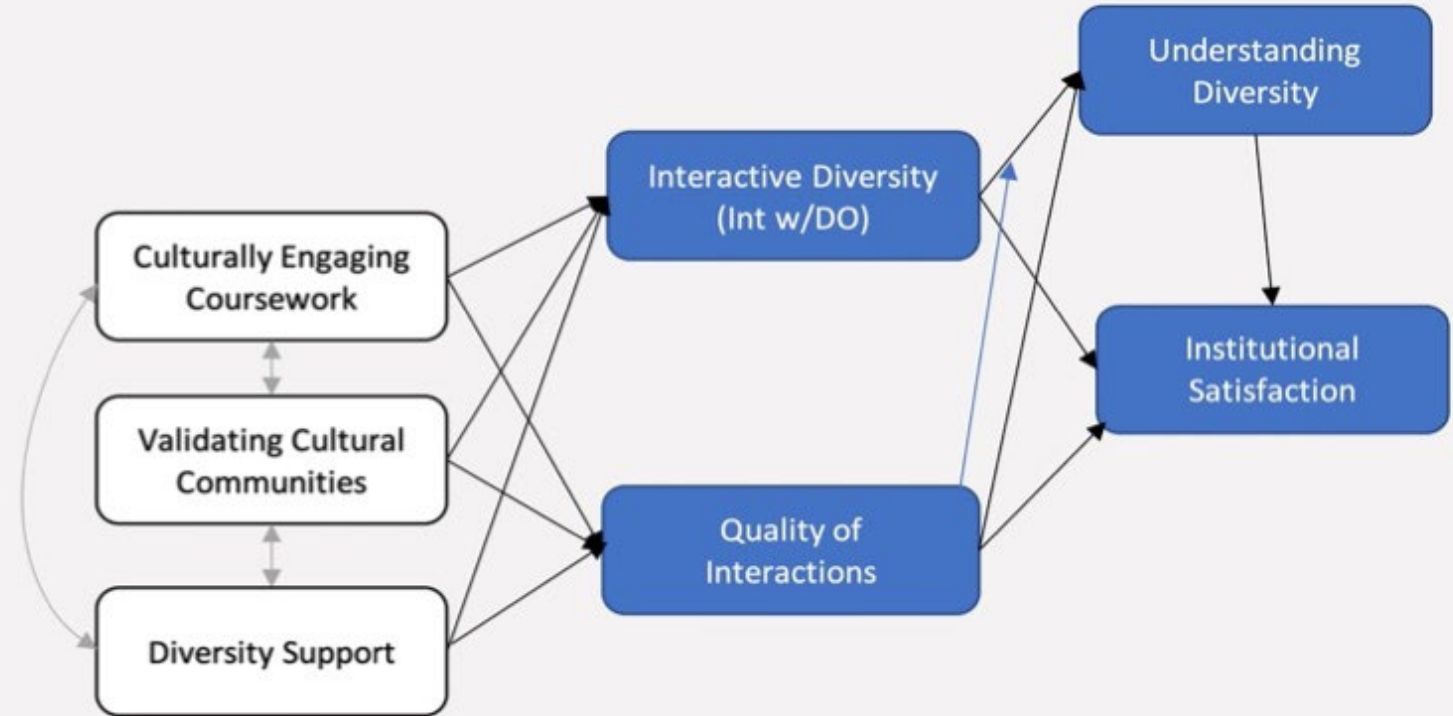
# Research Question 2

To what extent are CIS reports of quality of interactions with students, faculty, and staff on campus associated with associated with:

The extent to which their classes were culturally engaging?

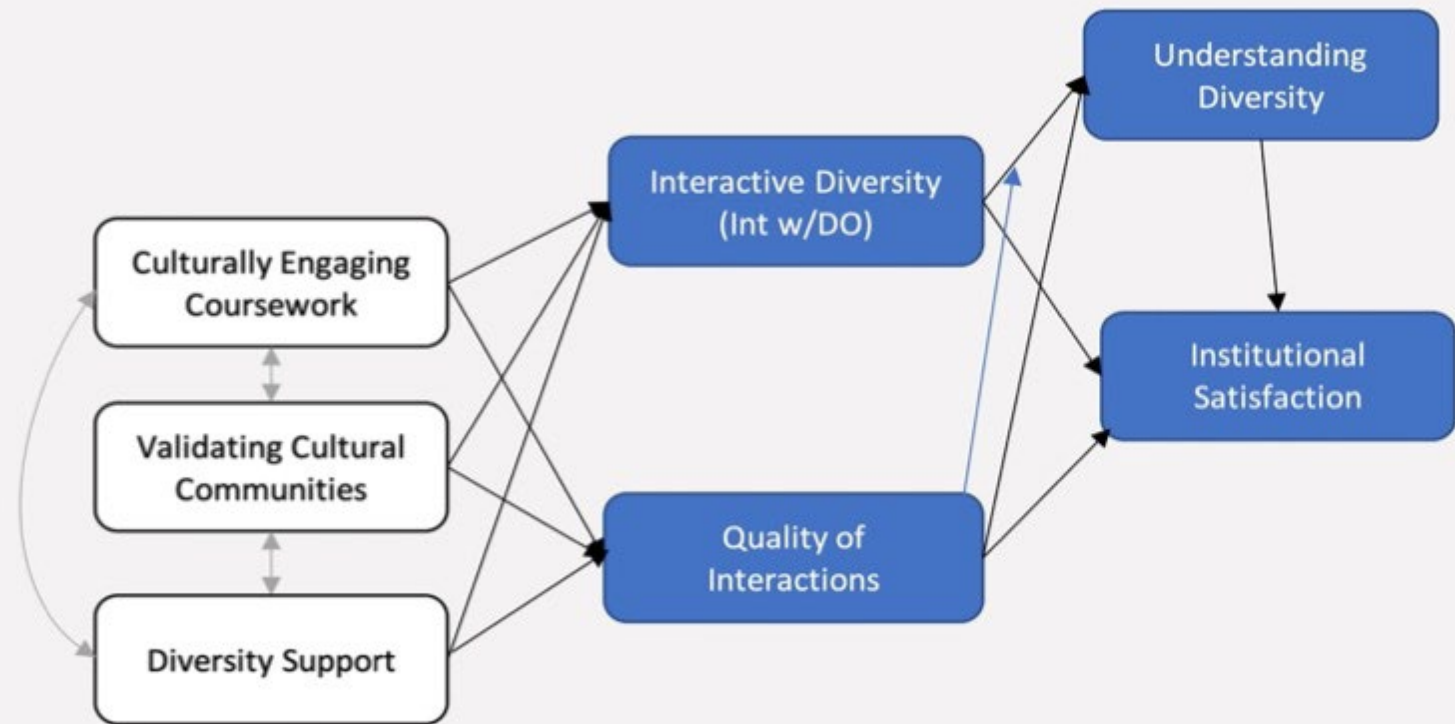
Their perceptions of institutional support for diverse students through programs and services (e.g., support offices, programs, and initiatives)?

How well they think their institutions express value for the diverse cultures from which its students originate?



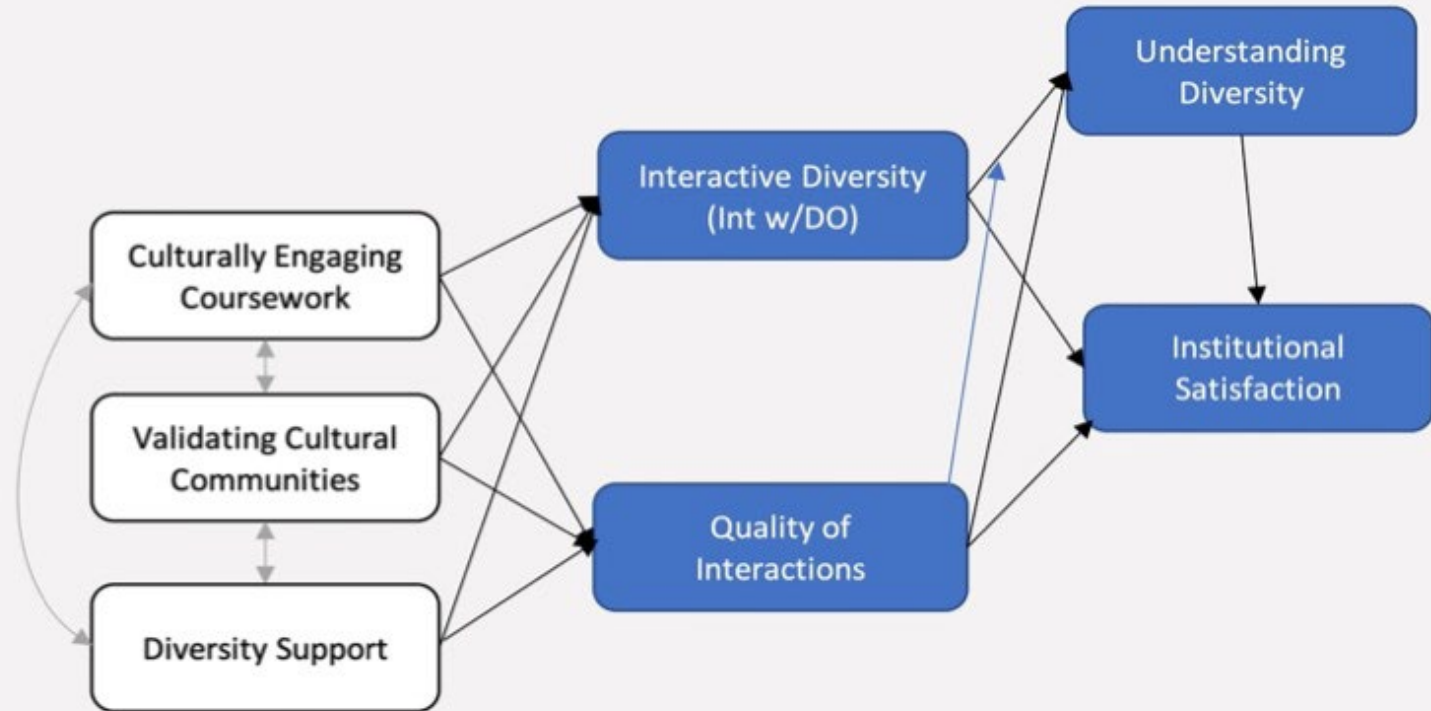
# Research Question 3

To what degree are CIS reported levels of interaction with diverse others and quality of interactions associated with their reported gains in understanding of diversity in the U.S. context?



# Research Question 4

To what extent is there an association between CIS reports of interactions with diverse others, reports of quality of interactions, and their reported gains in understanding diversity with their satisfaction with the college experience?



# Data Source and Sample Information

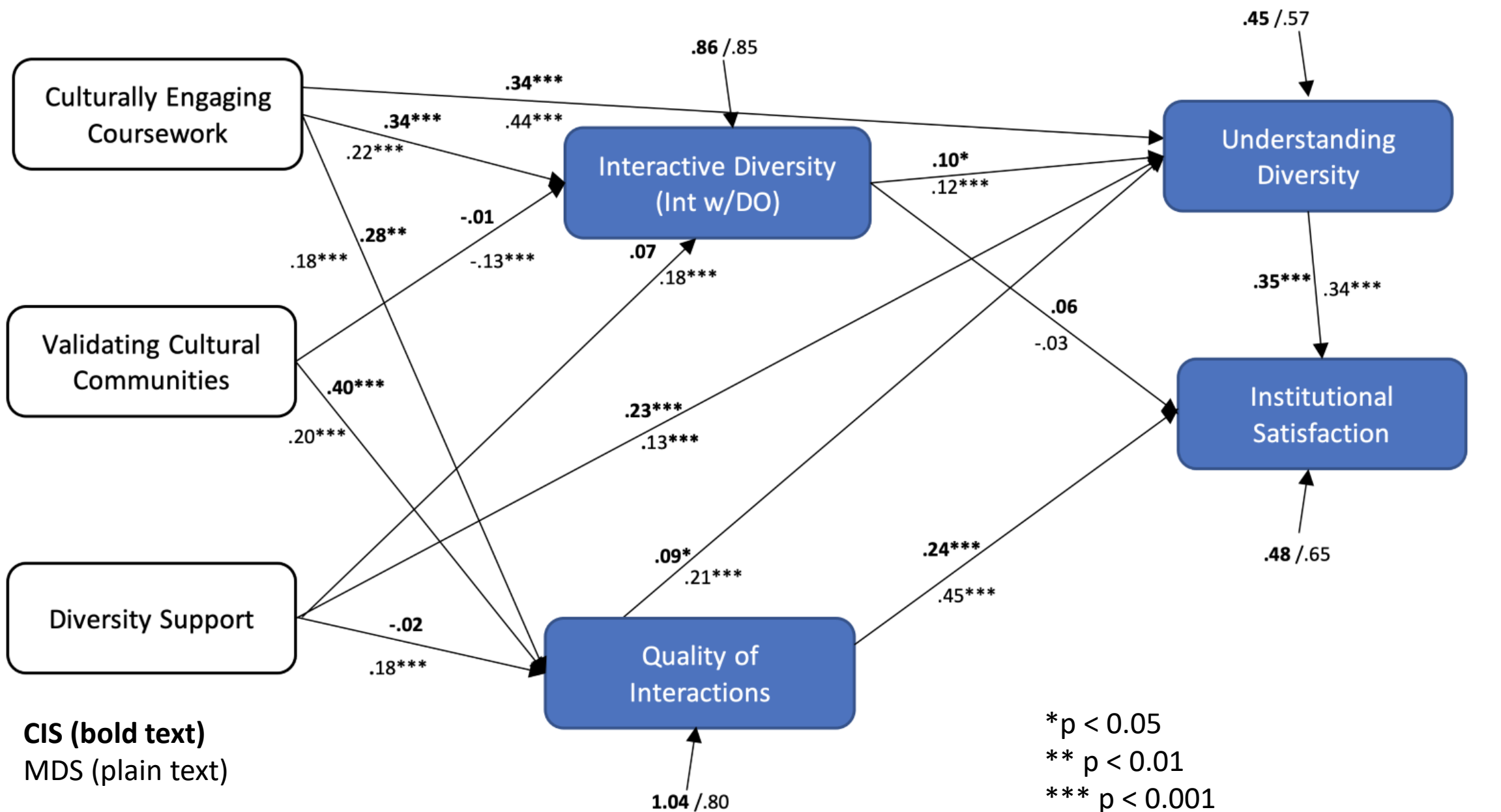
- ▶ 2017 National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) and optional module 2017 Inclusiveness and Engagement with Cultural Diversity (ICD)
- ▶ 128 U.S. bachelor granting institutions completed NSSE and ICD
- ▶ 224 CIS and 29,366 domestic seniors
- ▶ 212 CIS and 903 Matched Domestic Students (MDS) in final analysis

# Analysis Process

- ▶ SPSS Case Control Matching
- ▶ Matching Variables: First-Generation Status, Major, Living on Campus, Age, Gender, and Institutional Carnegie Category
- ▶ Utilized path analysis, a type of Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)
- ▶ Interaction and no-interaction model
- ▶ Modification indices to improve fit



# Final Model with Direct Path Coefficients



# Conclusions

# Study Conclusions

- ▶ Institutional efforts such as Culturally Engaging Coursework and Diversity Support as well as college environment influenced factors such as Quality of Interactions have more significant impacts on Understanding Diversity and Institutional Satisfaction
- ▶ Student influenced Interactive Diversity indicator does not have a large impact on outcome indicators
- ▶ MDS generally has larger impacts compared to CIS

# Assessment Conclusions

- ▶ Can compare different groups (CIS and domestic students)
- ▶ Including multiple diversity activities helps better understand the overall undergraduate student experience

# Potential Impact

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# Potential Impact

- ▶ Disaggregate samples to see how assessment indicators affect them
- ▶ Include multiple diversity activities in the analysis (especially diversity academic and cocurricular factors)

# Discussion

# Discussion Questions

- ▶ Why do different groups have different experiences on campus?
- ▶ How can we measure these different experiences in an equitable way?
- ▶ How can we measure both academic and cocurricular experiences in one project?
- ▶ What are some major takeaways you can take to your institution?



# Questions?

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