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Participation of Latina Women as Authors in Behavior Analytic Research

Anita Li[1] · Hugo Curiel[2] · Cristal Cardoso Sao Mateus[2]

Abstract

We reviewed publications in the *Journal of the Experimental Analysis of Behavior* (*JEAB*), *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis* (*JABA*), *Perspectives on Behavior Science* (*PBS*), and *Behavior Analysis in Practice* (*BAP*) to identify Latina researchers. We analyzed journal articles based on the authors' institutional affiliation—for the purpose of identifying researchers with Latin American affiliations—and separately conducted a surname analysis. The data show an increase in the number of Latina researchers who have contributed to *JEAB*, *JABA*, *PBS* (1997–2022), and *BAP* (2008–2022). The increases varied across journals, with *JABA* and *BAP* having the highest number of Latina researchers. These analyses are important because they provide data reflecting the participation of Latinas in four leading journals.

Keywords Diversity · Gender · Latina researchers · Surname analysis · Women

Women run the world, at least within the field of behavior analysis. Women make up 85% of certified behavior analysts (Behavior Analyst Certification Board [BACB], n.d.), and 53% of faculty in Association for Behavior Analysis International (ABAI) accredited university programs (Li et al., 2019). There has been a revitalization of examining women's participation within behavior analysis since Poling et al. (1983) first examined women's publication rates in the *Journal of the Experimental Analysis of Behavior* (*JEAB*) and the *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis* (*JABA*). Women's participation, for example, has been examined based on authorship contributions in behavior-analytic journals housed in the United States (Gravina et al., 2019; Li et al., 2018), authorship contributions in behavior-analytic journals housed outside of the United States (Curiel et al., 2022; Curiel et al., 2021; Curiel et al., 2020), leadership roles (Nosik et al., 2018), and conference presentations (Kranak et al., 2023). Rotta et al. (2020) have also provided a summary of historical and contemporary updates within the examination of women's participation in behavior analysis.

This research line has undoubtedly been robust, and recent publications indicate an increasing trend of women's contributions to the field. Though gender is an important consideration for analysis, it is also important to consider the intersectionality of other factors such as race, ethnicity, national status, and/or disability (Crenshaw, 1989). Efforts should also be made to identify the contributions and participation of less represented populations (Gravina et al., 2019; Li et al., 2018). Although there is research on the demographics of participants in behavior analytic research (Jones et al., 2020; Li et al., 2017), there is still question as to the racial and ethnic composition of the researchers.

One important population to note are the contributions of Latin American scholars in the growth and dissemination of behavior analysis in areas of experimental, translational, and applied research since the 1960s (Gutiérrez & Landeira-Fernández, 2018). There are currently 14 verified course sequences based in Latin America (ABAI, n.d.), and there are two journals specifically dedicated to behavior-analytic research (*Mexican Journal of Behavior Analysis* [*MJBA*] and *Brazilian Journal of Behavior Analysis* [*BJBA*]). The *MJBA* initiated its publication in 1975, and the *BJBA* initiated its publication in 2005. This year, the Women in Behavior Analysis association inducted Dr. Maria del Rosario Ruiz into its Hall of Fame, which serves to identify and honor the contributions of outstanding women in the field (LeBlanc et al., 2023). Although the BACB provides demographic

✉ Anita Li
anita_li@uml.edu

[1] Psychology Department, University of Massachusetts-Lowell, 850 Broadway, Lowell, MA 01854-3059, USA

[2] Department of Psychology, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, MI, USA

data for certificants, the majority of certificants reside in North America. Within the United States, the Hispanic population make up 18.9% of total population, making it the largest racial and ethnic minority group (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2023). At present, 26.3% of registered behavior technicians (RBTs) and 20.5% of board certified assistant behavior analysts (BCaBAs) identify as Hispanic/Latino, whereas only 11.0% of board certified behavior analysts (BCBAs) identify as Hispanic/Latino (BABC, n.d.). This suggests a lack of representation amongst supervisors and perhaps a lack of upward mobility for RBTs and BCaBAs (see Castro-Hostetler et al. [2021] for a discussion of cultural values and therapeutic relationships).

Fewer than 5% of Hispanic adults 25 and older have obtained an advanced degree post bachelor's degree in contrast to other groups (non-Hispanic white: 13.5%, Black: 8.2%, and Asian: 21.4%; U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2016). In addition, there is a significant underrepresentation of Latina women in academia. This issue is significant in two important ways. First, unique familial dynamics (Abraído-Lanza et al., 2022) affect opportunities for career advancement, such as the ability to attend conferences. Second, Latina women may be subjected to higher scrutiny on personal appearance and personality, resulting in prejudice and discrimination. Many Latina researchers have contributed papers on feminism and gender equality within behavior analysis (Baires & Koch, 2019; Baires et al., 2023; Mizael, 2021; Oda et al., 2022; Ruiz, 1995, 2003), which has been critical in maintaining diverse perspectives of practitioners and researchers in the field. In regard to authorship participant, Curiel et al. (2020) found an increased trend in the participation of women who published in the *MJBA*, and the *BJBA* showed equitable participation (with the exception of 1 year; Curiel et al., 2021). To date, the participation of Latina researchers who have published in United States-based journals is unknown. The purpose of this study was to fill this research gap by assessing authorship of Latina researchers who have published in our flagship journals (*JEAB, JABA*) and two ABAI-affiliated journals with the highest publication outputs, *BAP* and *Perspectives on Behavior Science* (*PBS;* formally *The Behavior Analyst).*

Participation of Latina Researchers via Institutional Affiliation

We analyzed four behavior-analytic journals and adopted previous methodologies to identify Latina researchers based on their institutional affiliation (cf. Curiel & Curiel, 2023; Dymond, 1997; Dymond & Critchfield, 2001). We examined 25 years—1997 through 2022—of articles published in *JEAB, JABA, PBS,* and 15 years—2008 through 2022—for *BAP*. *BAP*'s inaugural year was 2008. We

created a data file that included each article's publication year, volume, issue, title, and listed author(s). We did not include editorials, obituaries and memorials, introductions to special issues, article corrections, or reprints in our data set. We then examined each article's listed author(s) and their institutional affiliation(s) either from the article or from the publisher's website. We coded each article based on the authors' geographic affiliation using the same methods from Curiel et al. (2023) and Dymond et al. (1997). The geographic categories were Australasia/East Asia, Europe, Latin America, Middle East, Africa, North America (Canada, United States, and U.S. territories), and Cooperative. The Cooperative category included articles that listed two or more authors from two geographic categories (e.g., one author from Latin America and another from Europe).

To extract relevant information on the participation of Latina American-affiliated researchers, we reviewed all articles that were categorized as Latin America and Cooperative. From the Cooperative category, we examined and extracted authors with Latin America affiliations. We then coded the listed authors as women or men based on their first name (see Li et al., 2018; Poling et al., 1983). When this procedure did not allow an author to be classified, a Google search was conducted using the person's full name in sources such as university web pages, company web pages, invited speaker biographies, and social media (e.g., LinkedIn, ResearchGate). This procedure allowed all author names to be coded.

We scored interrater agreement for 10% (*n* = 470) of randomly selected articles. A secondary data collector independently coded the articles using the same coding procedure. The interrater agreement was calculated by dividing the number of correspondences per article by the total number of articles scored. Correspondences were entries in which both raters scored the same category or categories; noncorrespondence were entries in which the scored categories differed between raters. Interrater agreement was 99%.

Table 1 shows the count of women authors with a Latin American affiliation for each journal by year. There was a total of 32, 16, and 11 women authors listed with a Latin American affiliation for *JEAB*, *JABA*, and *PBS*, respectively, across the 25-year assessment period. The proportion of women relative to all authors with a Latin American affiliation was 30% in *JEAB,* 64% in *JABA,* and 24% in *PBS.* There was a total of nine women authors with a Latin American affiliation in the 15 years of publications for *BAP*, which accounted for 56% of authors with a Latin American affiliation. This analysis provides a conservative estimate of Latina researchers publishing from Latin American affiliations, but it should be noted that this analysis should not be interpreted as prevalence or representation of researchers from Latin America.

Table 1 Number of Women Authors with Latin American Affiliation

Year	*JEAB*	*JABA*	*PBS*	*BAP*
1997	0	0	0	--
1998	3	0	0	--
1999	0	0	0	--
2000	0	2	0	--
2001	0	0	0	--
2002	0	0	0	--
2003	0	0	0	--
2004	1	3	0	--
2005	1	0	0	--
2006	2	0	2	--
2007	0	0	2	--
2008	0	0	1	0
2009	0	0	0	0
2010	0	0	0	0
2011	0	0	0	0
2012	0	0	1	0
2013	0	0	0	0
2014	2	0	0	0
2015	4	3	0	0
2016	2	0	0	0
2017	4	1	1	1
2018	3	0	0	0
2019	1	0	2	0
2020	4	5	2	6
2021	3	1	0	0
2022	2	1	0	2
Total	33	16	11	9

JEAB Journal of the Experimental Analysis of Behavior, *JABA* Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis, *PBS* Perspectives on Behavior Science, *BAP* Behavior Analysis in Practice

Participation of Latina Researchers Identified via Surname Analysis

One limitation of analyzing researchers according to their institutional affiliation is that it may underestimate the prevalence of Latina researchers who do not have a Latin American affiliation. We, therefore, conducted a surname analysis to identify women who may have not been accounted for in the previous analysis. Surnames are derived from large datasets such as tax records, health administrative data, and/or census records and classified according to cultural, ethnic, or linguistic group. For example, the University College London developed "Onomap," a software which contains approximately 450,000 surnames from 26 countries and provides an ethnicity classification based on probability using name clustering techniques (Lakha et al., 2011). Surname analysis have proven fruitful in other areas of practice. For example, Morgan et al. (2004) and Wei et al. (2006) found

that using a Hispanic matching surname list enhanced their accuracy of identifying Hispanic patients utilizing Medicare, as opposed to using race codes alone. Both projects used the 1990 U.S. Census Spanish surname list (Word & Perkins, 1996), which provides 639 most frequently occurring heavily Hispanic surnames. The inventory is based on previous Spanish surname lists provided by the U.S. Census—beginning in 1950—but conducts additional statistical analysis to determine surname positional rankings and probability of Hispanic origin.

We replicated Morgan et al. (2004) and Wei et al.'s (2006) method in our analysis of behavior analytic researchers' surnames for *JEAB*, *JABA*, *PBS,* and *BAP*. In an effort to further expand the list to represent authors in behavior analysis who identify as Hispanic but may not possess a common surname, we emailed individuals listed on the editorial boards of each journal to inquire if the editorial member identified as Hispanic. Of 226 unique members, we received 108 responses, 15 of which indicated they identified as Hispanic. Nine of the 15 surnames were already included in the existing surname list. Six additional surnames were added, thus resulting in a total of 645 surnames in our analysis.

Using our data file that included each article's information (e.g., publication year, listed authors), we created a formula to return any matches per each surname from the list of 645. This yielded a total of 1,075 matches. We then manually evaluated each match to determine whether it was a listed author's surname. We did not include matches to the author's first name (e.g., surname Leon matched the first name Leonard partially) or partial matches to their surname (e.g., surname Gil partially matched the surname Gilroy). We also manually evaluated authors with compound surnames (e.g., Rosales Ruiz; Alonzo-Alverez) to avoid duplicate counts. This resulted in the removal of 26 matches.

We scored interrater agreement for 15% ($n = 162$) of randomly selected articles from the original matches. A secondary data collector independently coded the articles. The interrater agreement was calculated by dividing the number of correspondences per article by the total number of articles scored. Correspondences were entries in which both raters independently coded the same; noncorrespondences were entries in which the codes differed between raters. Interrater agreement was 100%.

From the last 25 years of *JEAB*, *JABA*, *PBS* and 15 years of *BAP*, there were a total of 614 authors that contained a surname from the 1990 U.S. Census Hispanic surname list. Figure 1 shows the count of authors per 5-year interval for each journal. Figure 2 shows the cumulative total for each journal. There have been increases in the number of Hispanic surnames, with differing degrees, across all journals from the initial assessment period to 2022. *JABA* had the highest cumulative count (299 authors), followed by *JEAB* (161 authors), *BAP* (106 authors), and *PBS* (48 authors).

Fig. 1 Number of Authors with a Matching Hispanic Surname. *Note*. BAP = The counts are presented in 5-year intervals. *Behavior Analysis in Practice*; *JABA = Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*; *JEAB = Journal of the Experimental Analysis of Behavior*; and *PBS = Perspectives on Behavior Science*
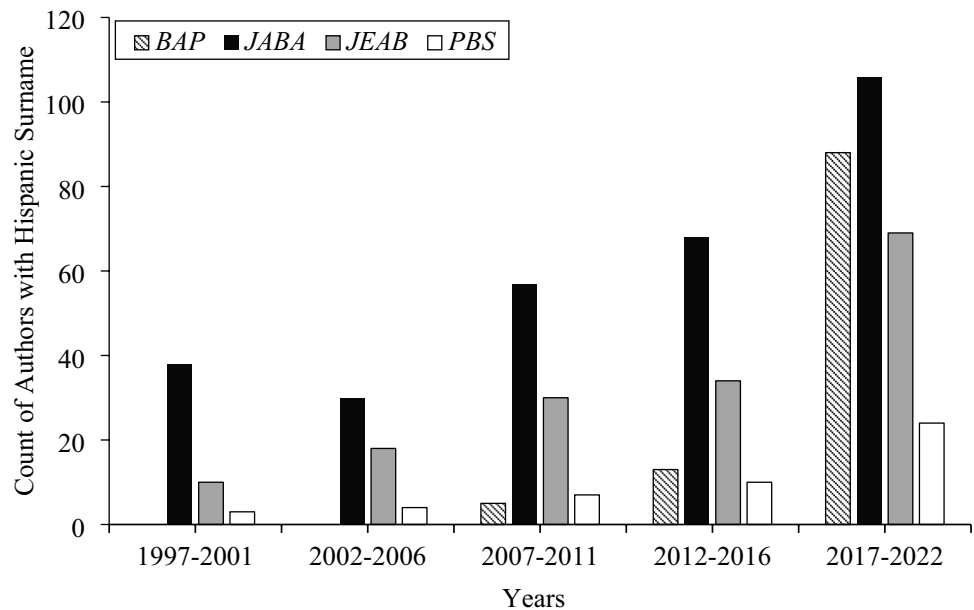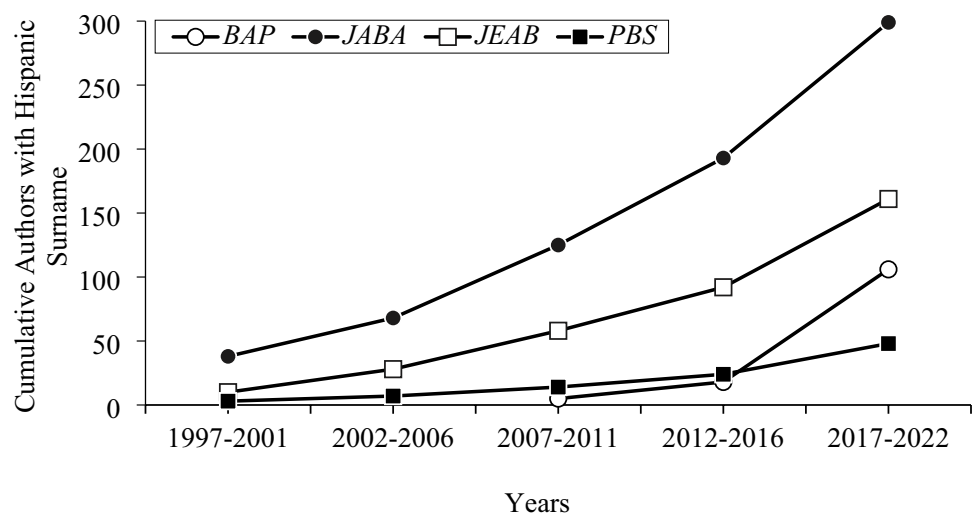

Fig. 2 Cumulative Number of Authors with a Matching Hispanic Surname. *Note*. BAP = *Behavior Analysis in Practice*; *JABA = Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*; *JEAB = Journal of the Experimental Analysis of Behavior*; and *PBS = Perspectives on Behavior Science*

We also evaluated each matching author and coded the author as woman or man. This procedure allowed all but two authors (0.32% of the total) to be coded. Figure 3 depicts the count of women with a matching surname across 5-year intervals. Figure 4 depicts the cumulative number of women coded authors with a matching surname. *JABA* has the highest cumulative count of women authors (168), followed by *BAP* (85), *JEAB* (57), and *PBS* (20).

Discussion

There has been an increase in the number of Latina researchers who have contributed research to *JEAB*, *JABA*, *PBS*, and *BAP* in the past 25 years. *JABA* and *BAP* had a higher proportion of Latina authors for 2002 to 2022. Latina authors

increased in count across all four journals in the last 5 years. It should be noted that Latina authors increased over 400% in *BAP* (13–67 authors), over 150% in *JEAB* (3–8 authors), and over 50% in both *JABA* (43–72 authors) and *PBS* (14–23 authors) from 2012–2016 to 2017–2022. However, in regard to researchers with Latin American institutional affiliations, there were significantly less authors. This is unsurprising, as over 75% of published articles from 1997 to 2020 were published by researchers with a North American affiliation (Curiel & Curiel, 2023) and over 75% of verified course sequences are located in North America (ABAI, n.d.).

Although there have been significant increases in the participation of Latina authors in the past 25 years, there remains ample room for improvement. Although there were substantial increases in percentage, the absolute numbers are still concerning. For example, although *BAP* grew from

Fig. 3 Number of Women Authors with a Matching Hispanic Surname. *Note. BAP = Behavior Analysis in Practice; JABA = Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis; JEAB = Journal of the Experimental Analysis of Behavior; and PBS = Perspectives on Behavior Science*
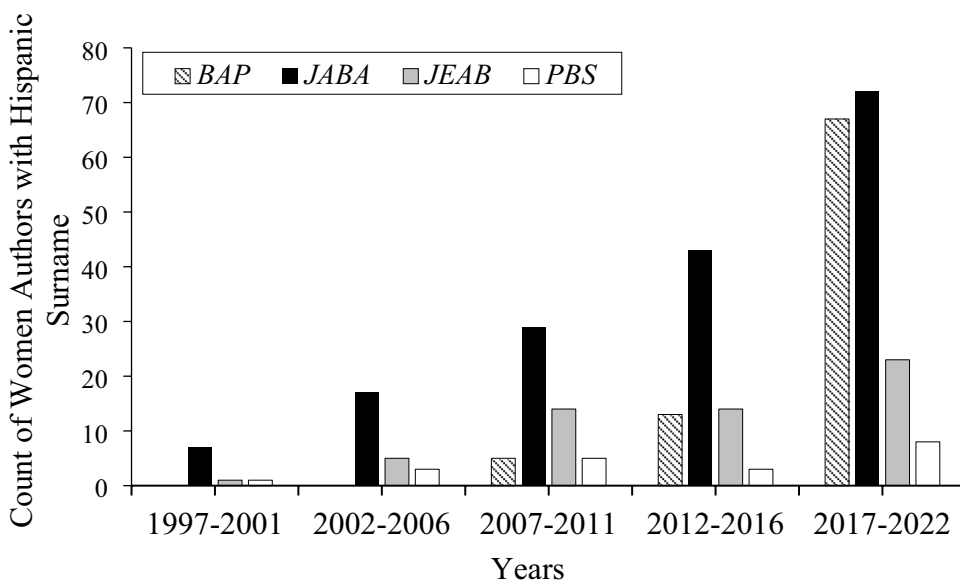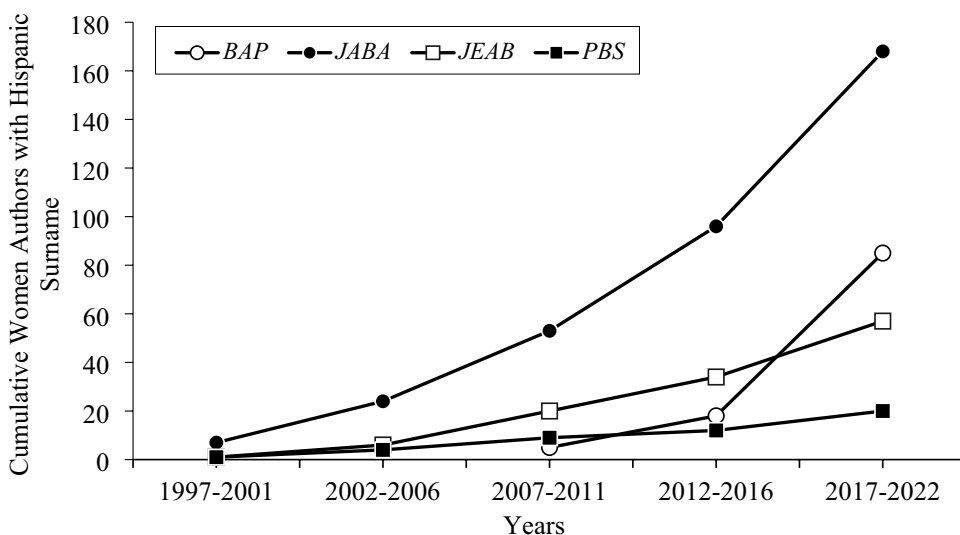
Fig. 4 Cumulative Number of Women Authors with a Matching Hispanic Surname. *Note. BAP = Behavior Analysis in Practice; JABA = Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis; JEAB = Journal of the Experimental Analysis of Behavior; and PBS = Perspectives on Behavior Science*

13 to 67 researchers within 5 years—demonstrating a 400% increase—consider that a single issue (no. 3) published in 2022 in *BAP* contained 99 total authors. Researchers must continue to evaluate the trend and trajectory of the make-up and characteristics of researchers publishing within the field. It is critical for underrepresented populations to be represented at higher levels in the field (e.g., higher education, training programs, and in organizational leadership roles). Ong et al. (2011) found that funding, mentorship and role models, department climate, support from faculty, and networks are critical to women of color's success in graduate school. As Brunsma et al. (2017) aptly stated, "perhaps there is something else going on here related to what it might be like to swim, tread, or drown in the White waters of academia" (p. 5). A counterargument can be made that it is

expected that ethnic minorities would have reduced participation in any given field due to the proportion of the overall population; however, it is known that the field of psychology is less diverse than others (Bischel et al., 2019). In our opinion, it is not the likelihood that some groups are content with certain levels of positions or work, but that there are likely systemic barriers affecting increased participation and growth in research and academia.

Language may pose another significant barrier for Latina researchers who are not fluent in English. They may struggle with the submission process, to understand reviewer comments, and to communicate with peers in the field. Some journals offer language editing services, but those are often costly for scientists who earn their income in other currencies (Valenzuela-Toro & Viglino, 2021). In addition,

identifying a research partner who is fluent in English may be time-consuming and may detract from the work of the original author (see Castro-Hostetler et al., 2021). These challenges are not unique to researchers in behavior analysis, but a shared burden for Latina researchers in all fields.

We attempted to estimate the participation of Latina researchers in select behavior-analytic journals by analyzing research articles based on the authors' institutional affiliation and surnames. Due to the heterogenous nature of the Hispanic ethnicity, our methods were limited to pragmatic assumptions. As our Hispanic surname list only contained 645 surnames, it is likely that our data are an underestimation of the participation of Latina women in behavior analysis. In addition, Brazilian surnames may not be appropriately represented in the Hispanic surname list. Though the terms "Latin" and "Hispanic" are often used interchangeably, the latter excludes Brazilians. Furthermore, Latin American countries are heterogenous, comprising several ethnic groups such as East Asian and African populations. In an ideal situation researchers should be contacted to determine their racial and ethnic identifications; however, this is not feasible when analyzing decades of publications. In addition, our methods assume a binary distinction in gender via predominant name usage based on previous studies that quantified authorship and gender. That being the case, we apologize for the inadvertent erasure of Latine researchers who identify as non-binary. This would be an additional point of support for journals to recruit and collect such information from authors directly. Journal-collected information can provide additional nuances in analysis (c.f., Kranak et al. [2020], for an analysis of gender using *JABA*'s authorship history; Kranak et al. [2021] for an analysis of gender using *JABA's* recorded of accepted and accepted submissions). Another limitation of our research is that we did not evaluate participation of Latina authors relative to all authors in the 25 years but in the context of authors with matching surnames to the 1990 Census Hispanic surname list. We attempted to build a more robust list by emailing members of the editorial boards to add additional surnames; however, we received a response rate under 50%. This may be due to technical issues (e.g., outdated emails, emails marked as spam) or lack of interest. On the other hand, over half of positive responses were existing surnames on the U.S. Census Hispanic surname list, so this may be an encouraging demonstration of the validity of the list employed.

Latin American and Hispanic behavior analysts have been major contributors to the field (Gutiérrez & Landeira-Fernández, 2018). Although participation of Latina researchers has increased in the past 25 years, we hope to see increases in Latina practitioners at the BCBA and BCBA-D level. At present, there appears to be a "glass ceiling" for Latina practitioners at the RBT and BCaBA level. This metaphor refers to the barriers which prevent Latina practitioners from obtaining certification at higher levels. Diverse providers and faculty are critical to the success of our field to address the intersectionality of cultural variables and behavior change but navigating the white waters of academia and fieldwork experience entail experiencing isolation, microaggressions, sexism, racism, and lack of mentoring (Brunsma et al., 2017).

In closing, we provide suggestions that can be taken to support and encourage the inclusion of Hispanic/Latina women. One step in this direction is to break this "glass ceiling" is to highlight the growing contributions of Hispanic/Latina researchers to the field of behavior analysis—which was a goal of this article. However, disparities persist at higher levels in practice and academia. Unfortunately, increasing recruitment alone is unlikely to address these disparities, as Latina women face ongoing challenges such as institutional bias and lack of support. Furthermore, academics and practitioners in positions of power can (1) create, identify, and promote funding opportunities through department, university, or federal initiatives; (2) increase collaboration with researchers outside of the United States; (3) consult the relevant literature when providing mentorship to those of diverse backgrounds; and (4) maintain open communication with supervisees who are experiencing microaggressions, isolation, sexism, or racism. These guidelines are starting points to help address disparities in the field, but additional efforts will be necessary. We hope our preliminary data are helpful to those who are interested in examining the participation of populations while considering intersecting factors.

Declarations

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