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### Article abstract

This quantitative study seeks to explore collective identity profiles that emerge among French-speaking adolescents and young adults in Manitoba. A total of 493 participants completed a questionnaire measuring their level of identification with Francophone and Anglophone identities, their perception of continuity with respect to the future of the French language and culture in Manitoba, and their mental wellbeing. The results of a cluster analysis revealed four collective identity profiles, namely Bilingual Optimist, Franco-Dominant Optimist, Indifferent Pessimist, and Anglo-Dominant Pessimist. Participants who belonged to each of these profiles differed in terms of their age, their mother tongue, the type of school they attended, and their gender. Moreover, collective identity profiles were linked to participants' mental wellbeing, with those in the Bilingual Optimist profile and those in the Franco-Dominant Optimist profile demonstrating a significantly higher level of mental wellbeing compared to the other two profiles.



Varia

# Collective Identity Profiles: The Case of Francophones in Manitoba

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**Abstract**

This quantitative study seeks to explore collective identity profiles that emerge among French-speaking adolescents and young adults in Manitoba. A total of 493 participants completed a questionnaire measuring their level of identification with Francophone and Anglophone identities, their perception of continuity with respect to the future of the French language and culture in Manitoba, and their mental wellbeing. The results of a cluster analysis revealed four collective identity profiles, namely Bilingual Optimist, Franco-Dominant Optimist, Indifferent Pessimist, and Anglo-Dominant Pessimist. Participants who belonged to each of these profiles differed in terms of their age, their mother tongue, the type of school they attended, and their gender. Moreover,

collective identity profiles were linked to participants' mental wellbeing, with those in the Bilingual Optimist profile and those in the Franco-Dominant Optimist profile demonstrating a significantly higher level of mental wellbeing compared to the other two profiles.

**Keywords:** collective identity profiles; mental wellbeing; Francophone minorities; adolescence; young adulthood

## Résumé

Cette étude quantitative visait à explorer les profils identitaires collectifs qui émergent naturellement chez les adolescents et les jeunes adultes francophones du Manitoba. Un total de 493 participants ont rempli un questionnaire mesurant leur niveau d'identification aux identités francophone et Anglophone, leur perception de continuité quant à l'avenir de la langue et de la culture françaises au Manitoba, et leur bien-être mental. Les résultats d'une analyse de classification ont révélé quatre profils identitaires collectifs émergeant, soit Bilingue optimiste, Franco-dominant optimiste, Indifférent pessimiste et Anglo-dominant pessimiste. Les participants appartenant à chacun de ces profils se distinguent par leur âge, leur langue maternelle, le type d'école qu'ils fréquentent et leur genre. De plus, les profils identitaires collectifs étaient liés au bien-être mental des participants, avec ceux du profil Bilingue optimiste et ceux du profil Franco-dominant optimiste ayant un niveau de bien-être mental significativement plus élevé par rapport aux deux autres profils.

**Mots-clés:** profils identitaires collectifs; bien-être mental; minorités francophones; adolescents et jeunes adultes

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## Introduction

Francophones in Manitoba are a relatively small minority compared to the English-speaking population. According to the 2016 census, 3.7% of Manitobans reported French as their mother tongue, while approximately 8.7% reported speaking French well enough to conduct a conversation (Statistics Canada, 2019). Although they come from diverse geographic, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds (Hébert & Lentz, 2018; Marchand, 2004), they share a common language and similar experiences based on their minority status.

Almost 20 years ago, Duquette and Morin (2003) stated that Francophones living outside of Quebec faced a double minorization. Unfortunately, little has changed. On the one hand, Francophones in minority environments evolve in a context marked by unequal power relations relative to the Anglophone majority and in which the English language and culture dominate the social landscape (Bégin, 2010; Bernier *et al.*, 2014; Cormier, 2010; Melanson & Cormier, 2010). On the other hand, they are subject to normative pressures from Quebec's Francophone population, particularly with respect to linguistic standards (Duquette & Morin, 2003; Noël & Beaton, 2010). They also report having the impression that Quebecers are not aware of their existence (Boily & Vachon-Chabot, 2018; Levesque & de Moissac, 2018). As a result, Francophones living outside of Quebec often experience a sense of insecurity that translates into low confidence in their ability to communicate in standard French and a feeling of inferiority in relation to French-speaking Quebecers (Boily & Vachon-Chabot, 2018; Levesque & de Moissac, 2018; Melanson & Cormier, 2010; Noël & Beaton, 2010).

The demographic characteristics of Manitoba's Francophone population is also changing. Compared to the general population, Francophones (French mother tongue) in Manitoba are much older, with a 17.3 year gap in terms of their median age, while those who speak French and English are younger (Fédération des aînées et aînés francophones du Canada, 2019). Moreover, since the 1980s, there has been an increase in mixed (exogamous) unions with English being the dominant language at home (Rocque, 2019; Vézina & Houle, 2014). In this context, the progressive decline in the proportion of Francophones in Manitoba (Bégin, 2010; Lepage *et al.*, 2012; Statistics Canada, 2017, 2019) is not surprising. However, these statistics hide certain nuances within the Francophone communities. While the demographic weight of Francophones is decreasing, French immigration and French immersion are on the rise (Hébert & Lentz, 2018; Labour and Immigration, 2015). Therefore, although the number of Manitobans who reported speaking only French at home decreased by 23.9% between 2001 and 2016, there was a 20.6% increase in the number of Manitobans who spoke French as a second language at home in addition to their main language (Statistics Canada, 2019).

These complex dynamics define the context that underlies the identity development of young Francophones in Manitoba, who come to follow various collective identity paths or profiles (Levesque & de Moissac, 2018), defined as "types of belonging that refer to the way an individual negotiates his or her place into particular or general political collectivities" (Pilote, 2006, pp. 44, translated by Dupuis & Beaton, 2018). To date, studies on collective identity profiles among Francophone minorities are mostly qualitative. While they have the advantage of providing in-depth descriptions of emerging profiles, the small sample size makes it difficult to determine whether these profiles are representative of the target population. Moreover, qualitative studies are not well suited to analyzing how these profiles are correlated with other variables, such as mental wellbeing. This quantitative research aims to explore the collective identity profiles of Francophone youth in Manitoba in relation to their mental wellbeing.

## 1. Theoretical Framework

In order to measure collective identity profiles, it is important to identify the dimensions on which they vary. For ethnolinguistic minorities, a first dimension concerns their degree of identification with the minority group, which is influenced by the ethnolinguistic vitality of communities and socialization experiences within the family and at school (Deveau *et al.*, 2005; Landry *et al.*, 2006; Landry *et al.*, 2009). Several studies have shown that a strong sense of belonging to the minority group promotes higher self-esteem and life satisfaction and moderates the negative impact of discrimination on mental wellbeing (Forrest-Bank & Cuellar, 2018; Litam & Oh, 2020; Neblett *et al.*, 2012; Outten *et al.*, 2009; Phinney & Haas, 2003; Quintana, 2007; Romero & Roberts, 2003; Umaña-Taylor, 2004; Umaña-Taylor & Updegraff, 2007; Yoon, 2011). Similar results were reported for young Francophones living in minority settings (Bourgeois *et al.*, 2009; Gueye *et al.*, 2018; Landry *et al.*, 2009).

In addition to their identification with the minority group, studies on the collective identity of Francophone minorities in Canada should take into account their degree of identification with the majority group. In this context, young Francophones experience tensions because they find themselves between two official language communities and are thus compelled to make identity choices (Boily & Vachon-Chabot, 2018; Cormier, 2020; Cormier, 2010; Gaudet & Clément, 2009). According to the adaptation and acculturation model, minority and majority group identification represent two independent dimensions, suggesting that these two identities are not mutually exclusive (Berry, 2005, 2015; Berry & Hou, 2017). Based on these two dimensions, Berry (2005) identified four profiles: *assimilation*, *separation*, *integration* and *marginalization*. In fact, a number of studies have pointed to a bilingual, hybrid, or mixed identity among minority Francophones that is similar to the integration profile (Bourgeois *et al.*, 2009; Cormier, 2020; Dallaire & Denis, 2005; Gérin-Lajoie, 2010; Lafontant, 2002; Lai-Tran, 2020; Landry *et al.*, 2006). In turn, the way youth position themselves in relation to these two identities could have implications for their mental wellbeing. For example, research has shown that, in general, the integration profile is associated with better mental health outcomes among members of ethnolinguistic minorities (Berry, 2005, 2015; Berry & Hou, 2017), including Francophones in a minority setting (Bourgeois *et al.*, 2009).

Finally, a third collective identity dimension that could be relevant for Francophone minorities concerns the notion of ethnolinguistic continuity. According to Chandler and Lalonde (1998), the perception of oneself and one's community as continuous entities over time is an integral part of identity. It contributes to a sense of stability in the face of inevitable changes at the personal and collective levels, particularly during the transition from adolescence to adulthood, and it provides a foundation that unites the past, the present and the future. While research has linked ethnolinguistic continuity to wellbeing among Indigenous youth (Auger, 2016; Chandler & Lalonde, 1998, 2009; Hallett *et al.*, 2007), few studies have integrated this dimension in relation to the mental wellbeing of minority Francophones. Yet, Manitoba's Francophone community is undergoing significant change, due to the progressive decline in the number of Francophones, on the one hand (Bégin, 2010; Lepage *et al.*, 2012), and the increase in Francophone immigration and immersion, on the other (Hébert & Lentz, 2018; Labour and Immigration, 2015).

A qualitative study conducted in Manitoba (Levesque & de Moissac, 2018) revealed that while many Manitoban Francophones see this increase in French immersion and immigration in a positive light, others voiced concerns that it could affect their culture. The study also found that respondents belonging to the *insecure* profile—which included those who had a strong attachment to their Francophone identity, but believed that the French language and culture may cease to exist in the future—reported lower levels of psychological wellbeing compared to other respondents. Similarly, another group of researchers (Wohl *et al.*, 2010; Wohl *et al.*, 2011) stated that perceived threats to one's collective group identity contribute to a sense of insecurity called collective angst,

but only among those with a strong attachment to their minority group. This body of research suggests that a strong attachment to the minority group is not always a protective factor. When combined with a sense of insecurity about the future of one's community, this attachment could make youth more vulnerable to mental distress (Levesque & de Moissac, 2018).

These three theoretical dimensions find support in a quantitative study conducted with Acadian youth in New Brunswick (Dupuis & Beaton, 2018). The results of the factor analysis revealed three collective identity dimensions, namely *affirmation*, *detachment*, and *insecurity*. These three dimensions are similar to Attachment to Francophone Identity, Attachment to Anglophone Identity and Ethnolinguistic Continuity. However, they did not examine how these three factors interact to create various collective identity profiles. In fact, no research has yet considered these three collective identity dimensions simultaneously when investigating mental wellbeing among young Francophones living in a minority setting in Canada.

## 1.1 Objectives

The present study aims to fill some of the gaps in the literature on ethnolinguistic identity among Francophones in minority settings. Specifically, this quantitative study aims to: (a) investigate the collective identity profiles that emerge among a large sample of young Francophones in Manitoba, based on the three dimensions identified in the literature; (b) explore how these profiles are related to certain sociodemographic variables; and (c) examine the relationship between these profiles and mental wellbeing.

## 2. Method

### 2.1 Participants and Procedure

The target population for the study was Francophone (or French-speaking) adolescents and young adults living in Manitoba. Given that the Francophone community is diverse, we wanted to include individuals who identify as Franco-Manitobans, those who grew up in multilingual households, those from French immersion backgrounds, and French-speaking newcomers from other Canadian provinces or from other countries. They were recruited through undergraduate courses at Université de Saint-Boniface, the only French postsecondary institution in Western Canada, as well as through French and immersion high schools throughout the province. Inclusion criteria required that participants self-identify—at least in part—as Francophone, were between the ages of 14 and 25, and had spent at least one year in a Manitoban high school.

Prior to data collection, approval was obtained from the Université de Saint-Boniface's Research Ethics Board. Participants completed the questionnaire during a class period. High school students completed the questionnaire through an online platform. University students, on the other hand, completed a paper version of the questionnaire.

A total of 590 participants agreed to take part in the study. However, 34 were initially excluded because they only completed the demographic portion of the questionnaire. These were all high school students and they were younger on average (16.58) than the rest of the sample (18.22). The remaining 556 participants included 263 university students and 293 high school students, aged 14 to 25 years old.

## 2.2 Measures

The first section of the questionnaire included questions measuring demographic variables, including gender, age, ethnicity, mother tongue(s), place of residence, and number of years in Manitoba for those from other Canadian provinces or from abroad. The second section included a scale measuring the three collective identity dimensions. The third section included a measure of psychological wellbeing.

### 2.2.1 Collective Identity

A collective identity scale was developed by the research team. The original scale included 40 items measuring Attachment to Francophone Identity (e.g., I am proud to be a Francophone), Attachment to Anglophone Identity (e.g., When I have the choice, I prefer to speak English), and Ethnolinguistic Continuity (e.g., I am optimistic about the future of the Francophone community). These items were answered on a Likert scale (1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*). The results of the validation process are reported elsewhere (Levesque *et al.*, 2022). The final version of the scale included 29 items. It produced Alpha coefficients of .91 for the attachment to Francophone identity subscale, .85 for the attachment to Anglophone identity subscale, and .89 for the ethnolinguistic continuity subscale.

### 2.2.2 Psychological Wellbeing

Psychological wellbeing was assessed using an adapted version of the Psychological Wellbeing Scale. This measure, which has already been validated with a Canadian Francophone population aged 15 years or older (Massé *et al.*, 1998), includes 25 items measuring 6 dimensions of wellbeing. When combined, they create an overall wellbeing score. Items were answered using a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*never*) to 4 (*almost always*). The adaptation of the tool was validated in the present study and had good psychometric qualities. The Cronbach's alpha for all 25 items measuring overall wellbeing (0.96) indicates a high degree of internal consistency.

## 3. Results

All statistical analyses were performed using IBM SPSS Statistics for Windows, version 24.0.

### 3.1 Preliminary Analyses

The number of missing values on all variables varied between 1% and 4%. Participants with missing values on the collective identity scale were excluded because collective identity profiles were investigated with a cluster analysis performed using raw scores on the 29 items of the collective identity scale. Therefore, 21 university students and 42 high school students were excluded. They were younger on average (17.7) compared to the other 493 participants with no missing values (18.28). Descriptive analyses performed on the remaining 493 participants and presented in Table 1 revealed that most participants were born in Manitoba. Close to 60 cities, towns, villages, and municipalities across Manitoba were represented in the sample, with more than two third located in urban settings and close to a third in rural settings. These proportions are representative of the geographical distribution of Francophones in Manitoba (Lepage *et al.*, 2012). About half of the participants reported English as their only mother tongue, while close to a third reported French as their only mother tongue, and another 15% reported that French was one of their mother tongues. There was a higher proportion of women, while men and other gender identities were underrepresented in this sample compared to the general population.



## Sociodemographic Characteristics

Variables	Frequency
Institution attended	
University	49.1%
High school	50.9%
Type of school <sup>a</sup>	
French	54.6%
Immersion or English <sup>b</sup>	44.2%
Missing value	1.2%
Gender	
Female	69.8%
Male	28.8%
Other	1.2%
Missing value	0.2%
Place of residence <sup>c</sup>	
Urban (city, town, or village)	66.3%
Rural (municipality or rural municipality)	30.2%
Missing value	3.4%
Place of birth	
Manitoba	
Another Canadian province	
Abroad	
Missing value	
Mother tongue	
French	31.6%
English	47.7%
Other	3.9%
French and English	14%
French and other	0.6%
English and other	1.4%
French, English and other	0.4%
Missing value	0.4%
Age ( $M \pm SD$ )	18.28 $\pm$ 1.89

<sup>a</sup> This is the type of school that high school students were attending at the time of the study, or the type of school university students had attended when they were in high school.

<sup>b</sup> Some participants recruited through the university attended schools with an immersion program and an English program. Therefore, it was not possible to determine the exact number of participants from immersion and English programs.

<sup>c</sup> This classification is based on Census subdivisions of Statistics Canada's Census Profile, 2016 Census.

## 3.2 Emergent Collective Identity Profiles

Collective identity profiles that emerged among young Manitoban Francophones were investigated with the use of a cluster analysis performed using raw scores on the 29 items of the collective identity scale. The goal was to classify youth into a small number of mutually-exclusive groups called clusters, based on whether they shared certain characteristics with respect to their collective identity, while maximizing between-group differences among clusters. Considering that the identity profiles were not expected to be nested within each other, *K*-means non-hierarchical partitioning method was selected for the Cluster analysis (Everitt & Hothorn, 2011). With this method, the participants were placed in a multidimensional space with 29 axes corresponding to the 29 items. Then using a stepwise, iterative procedure, participants were assigned to clusters once the number of clusters was specified. Thus, the use of the *K*-means method requires a priori specification of the centre of clusters. As such, a hierarchical cluster analysis using Ward's linkage method was first performed to determine the number of clusters (groups or profiles) and the centre of each cluster. Ward's method uses squared Euclidian distances. It starts with each case



representing a unique cluster and gradually merges similar cases until a single cluster combines all cases. This method of classifying participants has been used in other research aimed at investigating collective identity profiles (Banks & Kohn-Wood, 2007; Carpentier & de la Sablonnière, 2013; Worrell *et al.*, 2006).

The number of meaningful clusters or profiles was determined based on the dendrogram, the coefficient diagram, and the theoretical framework that guided the study. Based on these criteria, it was found that a four-cluster solution best represented the data in the sample. Average scores on the three collective identity dimensions for each profile are presented in Table 2. Identity profiles were compared based on the three collective identity dimensions using a one-way between-subject multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA). With the use of the Wilks' lambda criterion, the results revealed that the combined mean scores on the collective identity dimensions significantly differed among the four identity profiles,  $F(9, 11185,38) = 200.09, p < 0.001, \eta_p^2 = 0.53$ . A series of one-way between-subject ANOVAs were also performed to investigate the effect of the identity profile on each collective identity dimension. The results, presented in Table 2, show that scores on each collective identity dimension differ significantly among the four profiles. These results confirm that the four profiles are distinct from one another with respect to their collective identity.

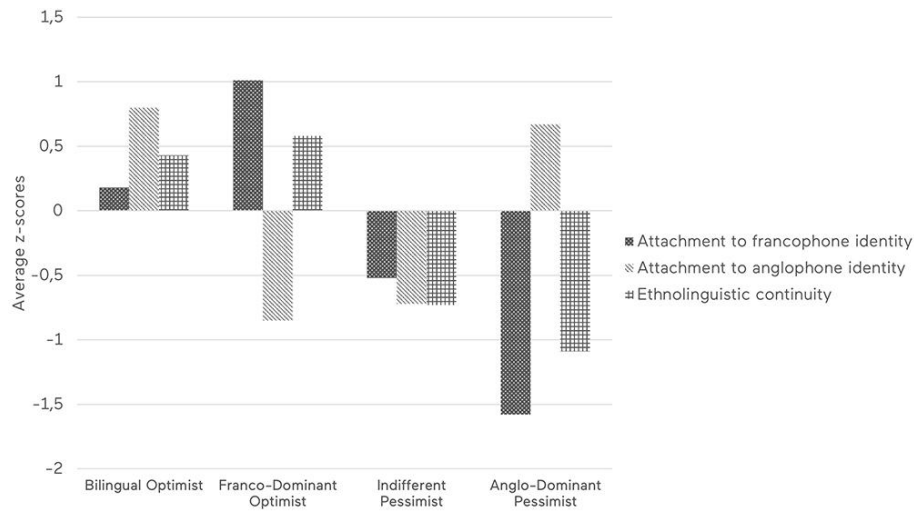
### Means ( $\pm$ Standard Deviations) on Collective Identity Dimensions as a Function of Identity Profiles

	Profile 1 Bilingual Optimist	Profile 2 Franco- Dominant Optimist	Profile 3 Indifferent Pessimist	Profile 4 Anglo- Dominant Pessimist	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	$\eta_p^2$
Attachment to Francophone identity	5.19 ( $\pm 0.69$ ) <sup>a</sup>	6.25 ( $\pm 0.47$ ) <sup>b</sup>	4.3 ( $\pm 0.68$ ) <sup>c</sup>	2.93 ( $\pm 0.81$ ) <sup>d</sup>	458.66	< 0.001	.74
Attachment to Anglophone identity	5.84 ( $\pm 0.59$ ) <sup>a</sup>	3.68 ( $\pm 1.06$ ) <sup>b</sup>	3.85 ( $\pm 0.83$ ) <sup>b</sup>	5.68 ( $\pm 0.80$ ) <sup>a</sup>	252.24	< 0.001	.61
Ethnolinguistic continuity	5.36 ( $\pm 0.71$ ) <sup>a</sup>	5.53 ( $\pm 0.90$ ) <sup>a</sup>	4.02 ( $\pm 0.79$ ) <sup>b</sup>	3.61 ( $\pm 1.11$ ) <sup>c</sup>	136.83	< 0.001	.46
<i>N</i>	177	138	103	75			

Note. Different subscripts show a significant difference among profiles, using Scheffé's post hoc test.

The four collective identity profiles were interpreted and named based on their average scores (calculated using standardized scores) on the three collective identity dimensions. Figure 1 depicts how each profile stands in relation to the rest of the sample, whose means on the three collective identity dimensions were set at 0. The first profile, labelled Bilingual Optimist, accounts for 36% of the sample and includes participants who have a relatively strong attachment to their Francophone and Anglophone identities, while also being optimistic about the future of the French language and culture in Manitoba. The second profile, labeled Franco-Dominant Optimist, represents 28% of the sample. It includes those who have a relatively strong attachment to their Francophone identity, but a low attachment to the Anglophone identity, and who are optimistic about the future of the French language and culture in Manitoba. The third profile, labelled Indifferent Pessimist, represents 21% of the sample. It includes participants who have relatively low levels of attachment to the Francophone and Anglophone identities and who perceive the future of the French language and culture in Manitoba to be uncertain. Finally, the fourth profile, labelled Anglo-Dominant Pessimist, accounts for 15% of the sample. It includes participants who have a strong attachment to their Anglophone identity, but a relatively low attachment to the Francophone identity. They also tend to perceive the future of the French language and culture in Manitoba as uncertain.

## Average Standardized Scores on Collective Identity Dimensions as a Function of Identity Profiles



### 3.3 Sociodemographic Differences Among Identity Profiles

Participants in the four identity profiles were compared to explore potential differences on sociodemographic variables. Chi-square tests of independence were performed on gender, mother tongue, type of school, and birthplace. Results revealed no significant relationship between identity profile and birthplace,  $X^2(6) = 4.7, p = .58$ . However, the results presented in Table 3 show that the identity profile was linked to mother tongue, gender, and type of school (French and immersion). Most participants who had French as their mother tongue and those who attended French schools belonged to the Franco-Dominant Optimist profile, followed by the Indifferent Pessimist profile. The majority of participants whose mother tongue was English and those who attended immersion schools belonged to the Bilingual Optimist profile, followed by the Anglo-Dominant Pessimist profile. Most participants who reported French and English as their mother tongues belonged to the Franco-Dominant Optimist profile, followed by the Bilingual Optimist profile. More female participants belonged to the Bilingual Optimist profile, followed by the Franco-Dominant Optimist profile, while male participants were distributed relatively equally among the four profiles. Differences in age were assessed using a one way between-subject ANOVA. The results, presented in Table 3, revealed a significant age difference among the identity profiles, with participants in the Franco-Dominant Optimist and those in the Bilingual Optimist profiles being significantly older than participants in the other two profiles.

### Sociodemographic Characteristics as a Function of Identity Profiles

	Profile 1 Bilingual Optimist (n = 177)	Profile 2 Franco- Dominant Optimist (n = 138)	Profile 3 Indifferent Pessimist (n = 103)	Profile 4 Anglo-Dominant Pessimist (n = 75)	Total (N = 493)	$\chi^2$	<i>p</i>
Mother tongue <sup>1</sup>						184.91	< 0.001
French	19 (11%)	<b>86 (62%)</b>	<b>53 (51%)</b>	1 (1%)	159 (32%)		
English	<b>125 (71%)</b>	18 (13%)	36 (35%)	<b>63 (84%)</b>	242 (49%)		
Fr. + Eng.	<b>23 (13%)</b>	<b>31 (22%)</b>	10 (10%)	7 (9%)	71 (14%)		
Other	8 (5%)	3 (2%)	4 (4%)	4 (5%)	19 (4%)		
Gender <sup>2</sup>						27.73	< 0.001
Female	<b>143 (81%)</b>	<b>102 (74%)</b>	62 (60%)	37 (49%)	344 (70%)		
Male	34 (19%)	34 (25%)	38 (37%)	36 (48%)	142 (29%)		
Type of school						113.61	< 0.001
French	54 (31%)	<b>111 (80%)</b>	<b>80 (78%)</b>	24 (32%)	269 (55%)		
Immersion	<b>120 (68%)</b>	27 (20%)	22 (21%)	<b>49 (65%)</b>	218 (44%)		
						<i>F</i>	<i>P</i>
Age ( <i>M</i> ± <i>SD</i> )	18.71±1.92 <sup>a</sup>	18.92±2.03 <sup>a</sup>	17.5±1.37 <sup>b</sup>	17.2±1.23 <sup>b</sup>	18.28±1.89	25.72	< 0.001

<sup>1</sup> Because of small cell sizes, French and other were counted as French, English and other were counted as English, and French, English and other were counted as Fr. + Eng.

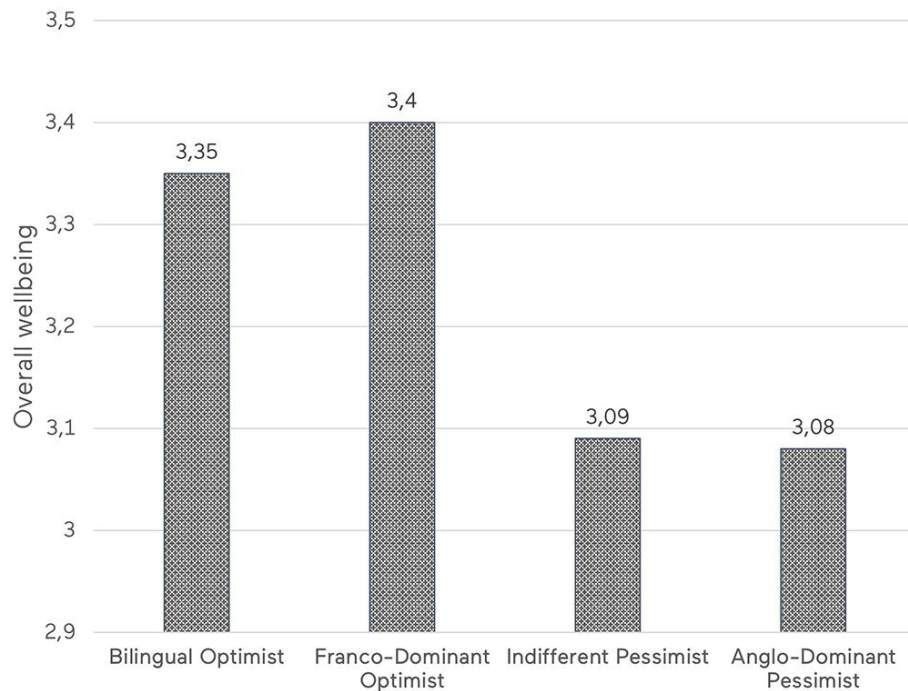
<sup>2</sup> Because of small cell sizes, participants who reported their gender as other were not included.

<sup>a, b</sup> Different subscripts show a significant difference among profiles, using Scheffé's post hoc test.

### 3.4 Psychological Wellbeing as a Function of Emergent Identity Profiles

Participants in the four identity profiles were compared based on their overall wellbeing, using a one way between-subject ANOVA. The results revealed significant differences in participants' overall wellbeing based on their identity profile,  $F = 12.01$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ,  $\eta_p^2 = 0.07$ . Scheffé's post hoc comparisons show that participants in the Bilingual Optimist and the Franco-Dominant Optimist profiles have a higher level of mental wellbeing compared with the participants in the other two groups. This trend is shown in Figure 2.

### Average Scores on Overall Wellbeing as a Function of Identity Profiles



Age was also significantly correlated with overall wellbeing,  $r = .24, p < .001$ , and there were significant differences in wellbeing as a function of school type,  $t = -2.31, p = .02$ , with participants in immersion schools having higher scores on overall wellbeing (3.33) compared to those in French schools (3.22). However, wellbeing did not significantly differ as a function of mother tongue,  $F = 1.35, p = .26$ , or gender,  $t = 0.32, p = .75$ . Since age and type of school were significantly related to identity profile (as shown in Table 2), it was decided to perform an ANCOVA to examine the effect of identity profile on overall wellbeing, using these two sociodemographic variables as covariates. The results indicated that the effect of identity profile on overall wellbeing remained significant even after controlling for differences in age and type of school,  $F = 7.26, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = 0.05$ .

## 4. Discussion

The objectives of the study were threefold: (a) to investigate collective identity profiles that emerge among Manitoba's Francophone youth, (b) to explore how these profiles are distributed based on certain demographic variables, and (c) to examine the link between emergent identity profiles and wellbeing.

The research findings revealed four collective identity profiles that emerged among a group of young Manitoban Francophones, aged 14 to 25 years old. These profiles are distinct from one another with respect to participants' level of identification with the Francophone and Anglophone communities, and the degree to which they perceived the future of the French language and culture in Manitoba to be continuous. Each of these profiles are discussed below, highlighting some distinctions in the composition of participants within these profiles and how they relate to mental wellbeing.

The most common profile was labelled Bilingual Optimist. It included people with a relatively strong identification with both their Francophone and Anglophone identities, and who were optimistic about the future of the French language and culture in Manitoba. Most participants in this profile reported English as their mother tongue and attended immersion schools. These data highlight the mandate of immersion schools, which consists not only of making students proficient in French, but of promoting a sense of belonging to the Manitoban Francophone community (Cormier, 2020). It is worth noting that 24% of participants in the Bilingual Optimist profile had French or French and English as their mother tongue(s) and 31% attended French schools. Finally, almost half of participants who identified as young women belonged in this profile. This profile seems to reflect what others have referred to as bilingual, hybrid, or mixed identity among minority Francophones (Bourgeois *et al.*, 2009; Cormier, 2020; Dallaire & Denis, 2005; Gérin-Lajoie, 2010; Lafontant, 2002; Lai-Tran, 2020; Landry *et al.*, 2006).

The second profile most observed among participants in this study was labelled Franco-Dominant Optimist. It included those who had a relatively strong identification with their Francophone identity, while having a relatively low level of identification with the Anglophone identity, and who were optimistic about the future of the French language and culture in Manitoba. The great majority of participants in this profile reported French or French and English as their mother tongue(s) and attended French schools.

Participants in both the Bilingual Optimist profile and the Franco-Dominant Optimist profile tended to be older than those in the other two profiles. They also had higher levels of mental wellbeing. Differences in their overall wellbeing remained significant even after controlling for differences in age and differences in type of school. These two profiles are akin to the *optimistic* profile that emerged from a qualitative study previously conducted in Manitoba (Levesque & de Moissac, 2018). However, attachment to the Anglophone identity was not considered in the previous study. The present findings suggest that optimists can be divided into two distinct subgroups: one with a strong attachment to their Francophone identity (more common among participants who have French or French and English as their mother tongue(s) and those attending French schools), and another with a strong attachment to both their Francophone and Anglophone identities (more common among participants from immersion schools and those who have English as their mother tongue). Contrary to what Berry's theoretical model and research would suggest (Berry, 2005, 2015; Berry & Hou, 2017), there was no difference in the mental wellbeing of participants in the Bilingual Optimist profile and those in the Franco-Dominant Optimist profile.

The third identity profile that emerged was labelled Indifferent Pessimist. It included participants with relatively low levels of identification with both Francophone and Anglophone identities, and who perceived the future of the French language and culture in Manitoba to be uncertain. The majority of participants in this profile reported French or French and English as their mother tongue(s) and attended French schools. In fact, among all participants with French as their only mother tongue and among those attending French schools, the Indifferent Pessimist profile was the second most common profile after the Franco-Dominant Optimist. Participants in this profile had, on average, a lower level of mental wellbeing. These findings suggest that these students may be a more at-risk group that French schools should pay close attention to. They could possibly benefit from strategies and initiatives aimed at fostering a sense of belonging to the Francophone community. More research is needed to understand why these students have a relatively low attachment to the minority language and culture and low level of mental wellbeing. One explanation could be that the French language and culture were not valued at home. Indeed, in addition to socialization experiences at school, a study by Landry *et al.* (2006) highlighted the role of families in the transmission of a French-dominant identity. The role family plays in shaping the collective identity profiles of young Francophones in minority settings could be an area for future research.

The last profile and the least frequently observed among participants in this study was labelled Anglo-Dominant Pessimist. The majority of participants in this profile had English as their mother tongue and they came from immersion schools. In fact, among all participants with English as their only mother tongue and among those attending immersion schools, the Anglo-Dominant Pessimist profile was the second most common profile (after Bilingual Optimist). For these participants, the low perception of ethnolinguistic continuity may be explained by the fact that they feel indifferent or unconcerned about the future of the French language and culture in Manitoba. Like participants in the Indifferent Pessimist profile, those in the Anglo-Dominant Pessimist profile also had a relatively lower level of mental wellbeing. Maybe this could be explained by their Anglo-dominant identity colliding with immersion schools' mandate to promote a sense of belonging to the Manitoban Francophone community and culture. Again, more research is needed to understand why they do not endorse the Francophone identity and why their mental wellbeing tends to be lower.

It is possible that among participants in both the Indifferent Pessimist and the Anglo-Dominant Pessimist profiles, the low level of identification with the Francophone identity can be explained by a sense of disengagement from the Manitoban Francophone community, due to a feeling of insecurity regarding the future of the French language and culture in Manitoba. These two profiles share similar characteristics with the “indifferent-disengaged” profile that emerged from a previous qualitative study conducted in Manitoba (Levesque & de Moissac, 2018), which was characterized by a low level of identification with the Francophone community and low perception of ethnolinguistic continuity. However, since attachment to the Anglophone identity was not considered in the previous study, we do not know whether this profile was accompanied by a sense of identification with the English-speaking community. In fact, the present study seems to indicate that the “indifferent-disengaged” profile that emerged from this qualitative study could be subdivided into two profiles: one with a strong attachment to the Anglophone identity (mostly found among participants with English as their mother tongue and those from immersion schools) and the other with a low attachment to the Anglophone identity (more common among those who have French or French and English as their mother tongue(s) and those from French schools). In both cases, these profiles seem to be linked to relatively low mental wellbeing.

In contrast to the qualitative study previously conducted in Manitoba (Levesque & de Moissac, 2018), none of the participants in the present study belonged to what was described as the *insecure* profile, characterized by a strong attachment to Francophone identity, accompanied by a low perception of ethnolinguistic continuity, which could in turn lead to a sense of collective angst (Wohl *et al.*, 2010; Wohl *et al.*, 2011). Further research is needed to determine if the identity profiles that emerged from the present study are representative of the French-speaking population of Manitoba and whether these profiles would be observed in other official language minority groups such as other Francophone communities outside Quebec and Anglophone communities within Quebec.

Given the correlational research method used in this study, we cannot infer causality. For instance, the relationship between collective identity profiles and wellbeing could be explained by the identity profiles having an effect on participants' mental wellbeing. However, it is also possible that their mental wellbeing could influence their sense of belonging to the Francophone and Anglophone communities and their perception of ethnolinguistic continuity. For instance, it may be the case that respondents who belonged to the Indifferent Pessimist and the Anglo-Dominant Pessimist profiles already had lower mental wellbeing which in turn led to a negative perception about the future of the French language and culture in Manitoba.

It is also possible that, in addition to their identification with the Francophone and Anglophone communities, there are other groups on which the participants' collective identity is founded, particularly for those who immigrated from elsewhere and those who identify as Indigenous. Since

their attachment to these other ethnolinguistic identities was not measured, the present study may not convey a comprehensive picture of their collective identity. For example, Lai-Tran (2020) highlighted the emergence of pluralistic identities among Francophone students in British Columbia that result from an increase in immigration. Some youth may also identify more strongly with other collective communities, such as the LGBTQ2S+ community. For example, a recent study highlighted that for some youth, integrating their identity with the Manitoban Francophone community and their identity with the LGBTQ2S+ community was often difficult and thus, they felt they had to choose between the two (Prada *et al.*, 2021).

Despite these limitations, this is one of the first studies to explore the notion of collective identity profiles—based on a combination of three distinct identity dimensions— among young Francophones living in a minority setting, with the use of a quantitative research method. This allowed for the investigation of how these profiles are related to other variables, including mental wellbeing. The use of cluster analysis revealed four identity profiles that emerged among a relatively large sample of young Manitoban Francophones, aged 14 to 25, who came from various locations throughout the province, and from both French and immersion schools. The results showed that these collective identity profiles have important implications in terms of mental health, as certain profiles appeared to be related to a higher level of wellbeing among participants, particularly among those with a high level of identification with their Francophone identity and a high perception of ethnolinguistic continuity. These findings highlight the need to support minority Francophone youth in the process of developing their collective identity, especially during this crucial period when they transition from adolescence to adulthood. Both Francophone and immersion schools, as well as families, can play a role in shaping their sense of belonging to the Francophone and/or Anglophone communities (Cormier, 2020; Landry *et al.*, 2006; Landry *et al.*, 2009). Maintaining the ethnolinguistic vitality of official language minority communities is essential as these efforts could possibly influence youths' perception of ethnolinguistic continuity and, in turn, personal wellbeing.

While this research offers a snapshot in time, it is important to keep in mind that identities are not fixed, but rather fluid (Boily & Vachon-Chabot, 2018; Gérin-Lajoie, 2010). Developmental and longitudinal studies could be conducted in the future to explore how participants' sense of identification with various identity profiles evolves over time, based on personal and collective changes that occur, particularly during the transition from adolescence to adulthood.

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