



The Impact of Sociocultural Factors on Self-Esteem Among Second-Generation Mexican American Adolescents

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Abstract

Hispanic adolescents most noticeably experience diminished levels of self-esteem when compared to their White, Black, and non-immigrant counterparts. Generational status can contribute to how some adolescents process sociocultural factors such as customs, parenting styles, cultural values, and more. The current study aims to examine the association between multiple sociocultural factors and perceived levels of self-esteem. Sociocultural factors include (a) family cohesion; (b) familism; (c) parenting attitudes and beliefs; (d) parental support; and (e) ethnic self-importance. This cross-sectional study utilized secondary data from the Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study (CILS) utilizing a sample of 583 adolescents. Results demonstrate a positive association between perceived levels of family cohesion and perceived levels of self-esteem and demonstrate a positive association between parenting attitudes and beliefs and perceived levels of self-esteem among second-generation Mexican American adolescents. However, no significant association was found between familism and ethnic self-importance with perceived levels of self-esteem. Findings suggest that parental support is crucial to fostering positive self-esteem among adolescents.

Introduction

Research Questions:

- What is the association between family functioning factors (i.e., family cohesion, familism) and self-esteem among second-generation Mexican American adolescents.
- What is the association between parental behaviors (i.e., support and beliefs) with self-esteem among second-generation Mexican American adolescents.
- What is the association between individual factors (i.e., ethnic self-identity importance) with self-esteem among second-generation Mexican American adolescents.

Hypothesis:

- Higher reported levels of family functioning behaviors will report higher rates of self-esteem. The study has also hypothesized that those who report higher ethnic importance will report higher levels of self-esteem. Additionally, this study has hypothesized that positive parenting behaviors will be positively associated with higher levels of self-esteem.

Literature Review

- Studies observing Hispanic adolescents have found an association between family cohesion and familism in limiting adverse outcomes and fostering positive self-esteem (Li & Warner, 2015; Lin & Yi, 2019).
- Positive parental support is positively related to self-esteem and can buffer risk factors (e.g., acculturation stress) (Lorenzo-Blanco et al., 2016; Miconi et al., 2017).
- Researchers found that the more differences identified among parent-adolescent values, the lower reported self-esteem and higher aggression among the adolescents (Toro & Nieri, 2018).
- Some past literature suggests that adolescents who place higher importance on their ethnic identity report higher levels of perceived self-esteem (Hernandez et al., 2017; Lin & Yi, 2019). However, other findings found no significant relationship between ethnic identity and reported levels of self-esteem (Der-Karabetian & Ruiz, 1997; Umana-Taylor et al., 2002).

Methodology

Research Design and Data Collection Procedures

- The current study is a secondary analysis of the data from The Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study (CILS). CILS was a longitudinal study with three data collection points from 1991 to 2006.
- The current study is a cross-sectional research design and utilizes data collected from the second wave of CILS (CILS-II).
- Data for CILS-II were collected through self-administered survey questionnaires on school campuses.

Sample and Sampling Method

- For the present study, a subsample was derived from the follow-up sample of CILS-II. Criteria for the subsample were participants who identified with having Mexican nationality from at least one (1) foreign-born parent.
- The final sample size for the current study was 583.

Measures

- Familism was measured by utilizing three-single items of the Familism Scale.
- Family cohesion was measured by utilizing three-single items of the Family Cohesion Scale.
- Parental support was measured by three single-item questions that measured perceived levels of parental support without conflict and level of attentiveness.
- Parental attitude and beliefs were measured by a single-item question that measured cultural parenting ways as perceived by the adolescent.
- Ethnic self-identity importance was measured by a single-item question that measured the respondent's perceived level of ethnic importance.
- Self-esteem was an operationalized measure using Rosenberg's 10-item Self-Esteem Scale.

Table 1

Sample Characteristics (*N* = 583)

Characteristics	n	%
Gender		
Female	289	49.6
Male	294	50.4
Age in Years	<i>M</i> = 18.2	<i>SD</i> = .786
Grade Level		
Ninth Grade	4	0.7
Tenth Grade	14	2.4
Eleventh Grade	309	53.2
Twelfth Grade	243	41.8
College Freshman	5	0.9
College Sophomore	4	0.7
Other	2	0.3
Respondent Birth Country		
United States	359	61.6
Mexico	222	38.1
Philippines	1	0.2
Nicaragua	1	0.2

Results

Figure 1: Scatterplot of association between self-esteem total score and family cohesion total score

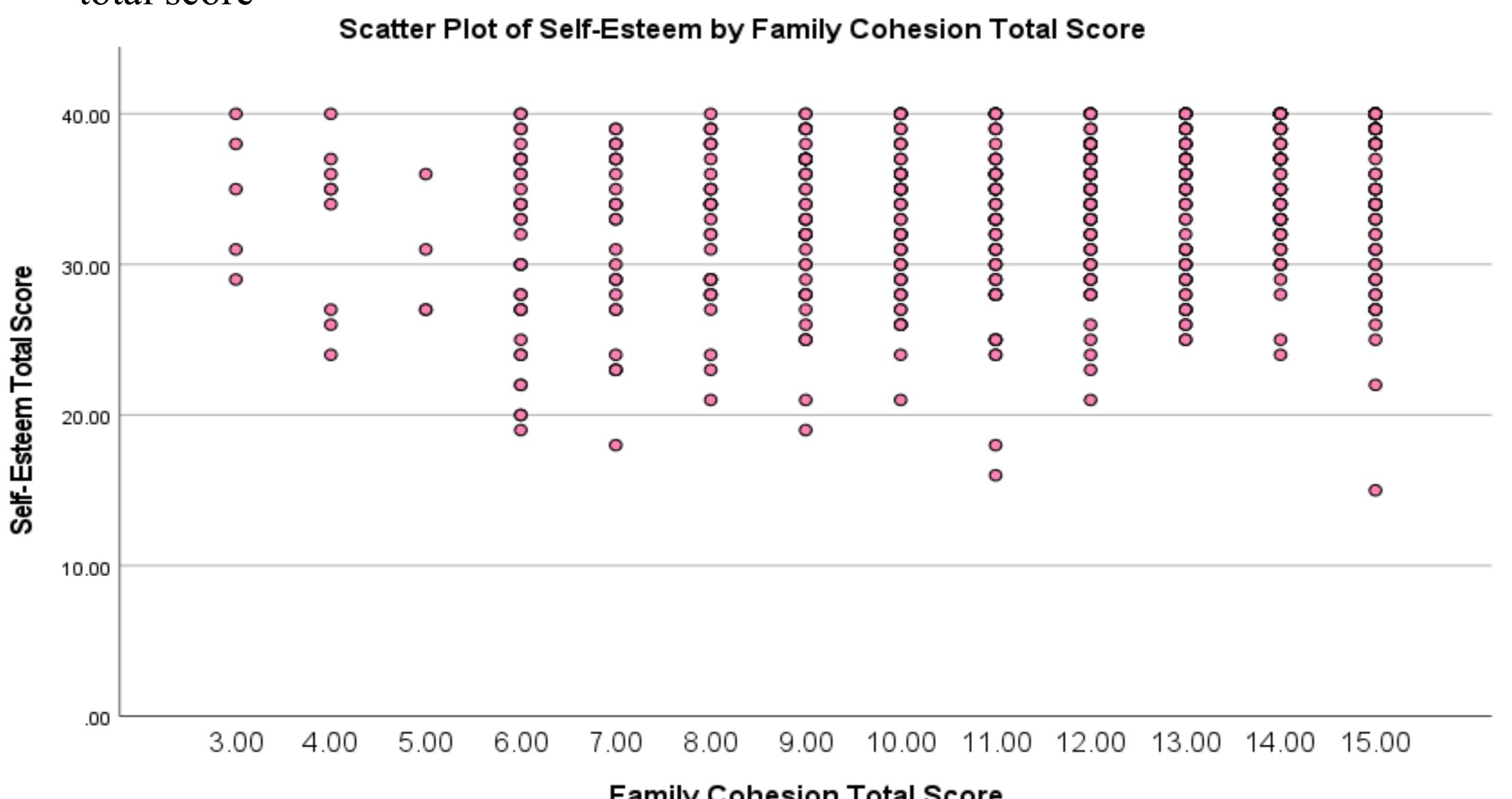
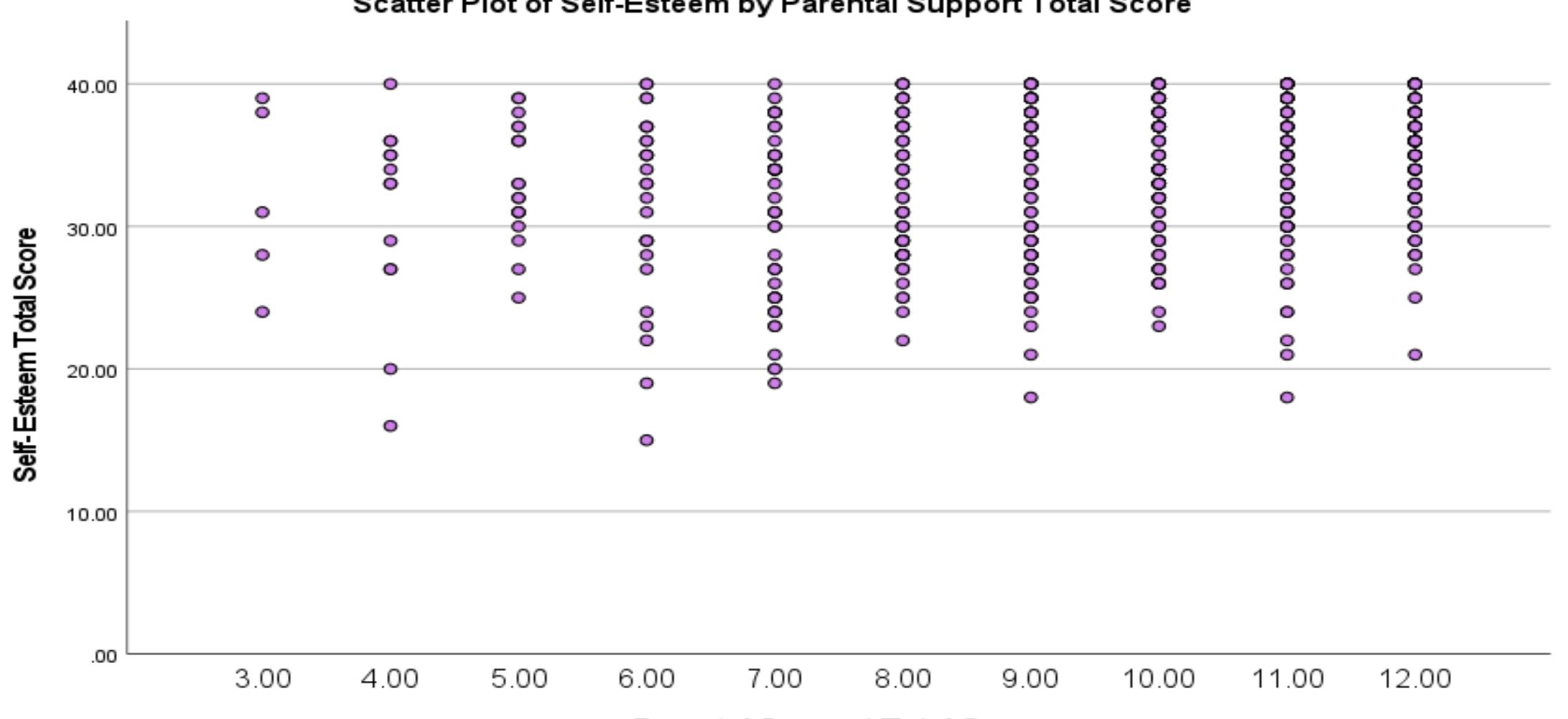


Figure 2: Scatterplot of association between self-esteem total score and parental support total score



Discussion

Key findings

- Consistent with the study's hypothesis, there was a significant association between reported levels of family cohesion and self-esteem among respondents. In addition, higher perceived levels of parental support were associated with higher reported levels of self-esteem. These two significant findings emphasize that overall parental support plays a vital role in adolescent development of self-esteem among second-generation Mexican Americans.
- Inconsistent with past literature findings and the current study's hypothesis, no significant association was found between familism and self-esteem.
- There was no significant association between ethnic self-identity importance with self-esteem and no significant association between cultural parenting beliefs and self-esteem. Although findings were unexpected, they could be explained by geographical characteristics that impact an adolescent's environmental stressors.

Strengths and Limitations

- Strengths include a large sample of second-generation Mexican American adolescents who were located in different states. Also, participants were able to specify their cultural upbringing and preferences to further narrow down variables of interest.
- Limitations include the usage of self-report questionnaires, and that participants were not from a diverse community within their regions. For example, respondents were from communities where it was largely Hispanic/Latinx. The ability to generalize across other Hispanic/Latinx with diverse communities is limited.

Implications for Research

- Further research across various communities is encouraged to develop quality services for children of immigrants of different ethnic and racial backgrounds. In addition, future research should specifically observe the well-being among second-generation adolescents due to stressors that could impact their development.

Implications for Practice

- From the macro perspective, findings emphasize addressing family support among adolescents with immigrant parents to promote positive well-being.
- Family support can be delivered through family therapy, psychoeducation regarding the importance of adolescent development, parenting classes that emphasize boundaries between support, conflict, and more.



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