

ABSTRACT

There is a shortage of research on how acculturation experiences influence the overall well-being of Non-US-born Latinos. The current study examined the relationship between acculturation experiences and lived experiences among Non-US-born Latinos residing in the United States. Secondary data from the National Latino and Asian American Study was utilized, and the sample size for the current study was 1,622 Non-US-born Latinos. The results revealed that more-acculturated participants had higher discrimination, higher family conflict, lower family closeness, and lower acculturative stress. Individuals with higher levels of acculturative stress had a higher family conflict, higher discrimination, lower family closeness, and lower acculturation.

INTRODUCTION

Research Questions

- 1) What is the relationship between everyday discrimination and acculturation and acculturative stress among Non-US-born Latinos?
- 2) What is the relationship between family closeness and acculturation and acculturative stress among Non-US-born Latinos?
- 3) What is the relationship between family conflict and acculturation and acculturative stress among Non-US-born Latinos?

Hypotheses

- 1) Non-US-born Latinos with high acculturation will have lower everyday discrimination. Non-US-born Latinos with high acculturative stress will have higher everyday discrimination.
- 2) Non-US-born Latinos with high acculturation will have lower family closeness. Non-US-born Latinos with high acculturative stress will have lower family closeness.
- 3) Non-US-born Latinos with high acculturation will have higher family conflict. Non-US-born Latinos with high acculturative stress will have higher family conflict.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Acculturation and Acculturative Stress on Non-US-born Latinos

- Acculturation produces stressful experiences that increase the risk of discrimination, depression, and smoking (Lorenzo-Blanco, & Cortina, 2013b; Meca, Cobb, Xie, Schwartz, Allen, & Hunter, 2018). Acculturative stress is considered a risk factor for poor mental health, particularly depression (Torres, 2010).

Discrimination, Acculturation, and Acculturative Stress

- Higher levels of perceived and actual discrimination increases Latinos' risk for developing chronic stress, depression, and smoking (Ayón, Marsiglia, & Bermudez-Parsai, 2010; Lorenzo-Blanco, & Cortina, 2013b).

Family Closeness, Acculturation, and Acculturative Stress

- Family closeness decreases as acculturation increases, which leads to increased smoking and depressive symptoms in Latinos (Lorenzo-Blanco, & Cortina, 2013a).

Family Conflict, Acculturation, and Acculturative Stress

- Latinos can further experience family conflict as a result of acculturation to the U.S., which can manifest into the development of mental health problems and usage of substances (Lorenzo-Blanco, & Cortina, 2013b).

Social Identity Theory

- Social identity theory states that an individuals' identity—in a given society or culture—is crucial to the development of their well-being, which will aid in the coping of stressors related to the acculturation process (Meca et al., 2018).

Gaps and Limitations

- There is limited research on the acculturation experiences of Non-US-born Latinos and how these approaches might relate to their mental health.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design and Data Collection Procedures

- The current research is a cross-sectional study that uses the secondary analysis of the National Latino and Asian American Study (NLAAS) from the Collaborative Psychiatric Epidemiology Surveys (CPES). NLAAS is a nationally representative community household survey that measures the prevalence that Latino Americans and Asian Americans experience mental disorders and the rates at which they utilize mental health services.
- A laptop computer-assisted personal interview or telephone interview was used to collect participant data.

Sample and Sampling Method

- The original study had 2,095 Asian respondents, 2,554 Latino respondents, and 215 White respondents. The sample size of the current research is 1,622 Non-US-born Latino participants.
- The NLAAS interviewed a group of non-institutionalized Latino Americans, Asian Americans, and a control group of White Americans—18 years or older—living in households in the United States, Alaska, and Hawaii.

Measures

Independent Variables

- The first independent variable was acculturation. The language proficiency and preference variable list were used as a proxy measure for the level of acculturation. Acculturation is the sum of responses to 3 questions that examined the respondents' level of speaking, reading, and writing in English. A higher score indicates higher acculturation.
- The second independent variable was acculturative stress. Acculturative stress is the sum of responses to nine questions that measured the respondents' degree of stress. A higher score indicates higher acculturative stress.

Dependent Variables

- The first dependent variable is everyday discrimination. Everyday discrimination is the sum of responses to nine questions that assessed the unjust or prejudicial treatment encountered by the participants. A higher score indicates higher daily discrimination.
- The second dependent variable is family closeness. Family closeness is the sum of responses to 10 questions that measured the emotional bond the participants have towards their family members. A higher score indicates higher family closeness.
- The third dependent variable is family conflict. Family conflict is the sum of responses to three questions that evaluate the regularity that participants experience active opposition towards their family members. A higher score indicates a higher family conflict.

RESULTS

Spearman's Rank Correlation Coefficient (Spearman's rho)

- Spearman's rho was computed to examine the relationship between acculturation, acculturative stress, everyday discrimination, family closeness, and family conflict. The results of the Spearman's rho analysis revealed that all the variables are statistically significant and weak in strength.

Acculturation and Everyday Discrimination, Family Closeness, and Family Conflict

- The results indicated a positive and statistically significant association between acculturation and everyday discrimination, $r(1,613) = .172, p < .01$; and acculturation and family conflict, $r(1,613) = .105, p < .01$. Higher levels of anxiety were associated with higher everyday discrimination and higher family conflict. The results also indicated a negative and statistically significant relationship between acculturation and family closeness, $r(1,613) = -.102, p < .01$. Higher acculturation was related to lower levels of family closeness.

Acculturative Stress and Everyday Discrimination, Family Closeness, and Family Conflict

- The results indicated a positive and statistically significant association between acculturative stress and everyday discrimination, $r(1,615) = .199, p < .01$; and acculturative stress and family conflict, $r(1,615) = .126, p < .01$. Higher levels of acculturative stress were associated with higher everyday discrimination and higher family conflict. The results also indicated a negative and statistically significant relationship between acculturative stress and family closeness, $r(1,615) = -.057, p < .05$. Higher acculturative stress was related to lower levels of family closeness.

Table 3
The Intercorrelations for Dimensions of Acculturation, Acculturative Stress, and Lived Experiences

Measure	1	2	3	4	5
<i>Independent Variables</i>					
1. Acculturation	—				
2. Acculturative Stress	-.405**	—			
<i>Dependent Variables</i>					
3. Everyday Discrimination	.172**	.199**	—		
4. Family Closeness	-.102**	-.057*	-.290**	—	
5. Family Conflict	.105**	.126**	.287**	-.428**	—

Note. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Table 1
Sample Characteristics (N=1,622)

Characteristic	f	%
<i>Sex</i>		
Male	721	44.5
Female	901	55.5
<i>Age</i>		
M	43.20	SD=15.819
<i>Work Status</i>		
Employed	963	59.4
Unemployed	98	6.0
Not in Labor Force	561	34.6
<i>Years of Education</i>		
0-11 Years	739	45.6
12 Years	362	22.3
13-15 Years	296	18.2
Greater Than or Equal to 16 Years	225	13.9
<i>Marital Status</i>		
Married/Cohabiting	1080	66.6
Divorced/Separated/Widowed	323	19.9
Never Married	219	13.5
<i>Race/Ancestry</i>		
Cuban	500	30.8
Puerto Rican	216	13.3
Mexican	483	29.8
All Other Hispanic	423	26.1
<i>Country in Which You Were Born</i>		
Other	1622	100.0
<i>Age at Immigration</i>		
Less Than 12 YRS	365	22.5
13-17 YRS	216	13.3
18-34 YRS	735	45.3
35+ YRS	306	18.9
<i>Number of Years in US</i>		
Less Than 5 YRS	250	15.4
5-10 YRS	245	15.1
11-20 YRS	411	25.3
20+ YRS	716	44.1
<i>Proficiency in Spanish</i>	M=9.38	SD=2.310

Table 2
Descriptive Statistics: Study Variables (N=1,622)

Variables	M	SD
<i>Independent Variables</i>		
Acculturation	5.75	3.097
Acculturative Stress	2.58	1.785
<i>Dependent Variables</i>		
Everyday Discrimination	14.05	6.482
Family Closeness	36.93	4.726
Family Conflict	3.68	1.166

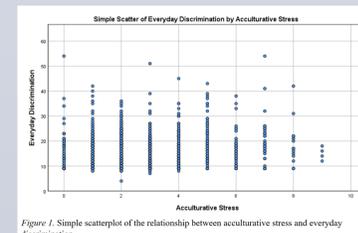


Figure 1. Simple scatterplot of the relationship between acculturative stress and everyday discrimination.

DISCUSSION

Summary of Findings

Consistent with Prior Research

- Higher levels of acculturation were associated with higher discrimination, higher family conflict, and lower family closeness.
- Higher levels of acculturative stress were related to higher family conflict and lower family closeness.

Inconsistent with Prior Research

- Higher levels of acculturative stress correlate to higher discrimination.

Implications for Research and Practice

- The current findings are critical to social work practice as it encourages future social workers to challenge social injustice and advocate on behalf of Non-US-born Latinos, a vulnerable and oppressed population.
- The current findings are crucial for informing future research of the acculturation and acculturative stress of Non-US-born Latinos. Plus, how those approaches correlate to this population's psychological health.

Strengths

- This study investigated Non-US-born Latinos.
- The broad age range of the participants—18 years old to 97 years old—provides reliable conclusions on the acculturation and acculturative stress experiences.

Limitations

- Institutionalized adults were excluded from the study.
- This study utilized data from a cross-sectional study, which only represents a glimpse of the Latino population during that period.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This capstone thesis project was inspired by my father, Rafael Lopez, who emigrated to the U.S. during the Salvadoran Civil War and no longer identifies as Salvadoran. I also want to recognize my husband, Jason Schachat, who listened to my frustrations and motivated me to pursue this project. My final thanks go to Dr. Karen Kyeunghae Lee for her tremendous patience, flexibility, and guidance. This project would not have been possible without her teachings and constant support, and for that, I am beyond grateful.

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