

## ABSTRACT

Second generation Latino immigrant students face a low self-esteem in the educational system due to social factors like school violence. Self-esteem and mental health are topics usually unspoken of by the Latino community because of the stigma it carries. It is critical to begin researching the importance of this topic to educate social workers of ways to best provide care to this population. The present study explored whether a relationship existed between violence in school and self-esteem. This study also examined the relationship between educational attainment and self-esteem of second generational children with parents from Mexico. This study is a secondary analysis of data from the Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study (CILS) which was carried from 1991 to 2006. The current study's sample size was composed of 552 teenagers (275 males and 277 females) in the eighth and ninth grade. The average age of participants was 14 years old. Data collection utilized self-administered questionnaires. Self-esteem was measured by 10 questions of Rosenberg's Self Esteem Scale (1965). The results indicated there was a positive association between self-esteem and school safety. Also, the results show that a higher-grade point average is associated with a higher self-esteem. Lastly, the results indicated that students who had a lower level of education had a significantly lower self-esteem than students who had a higher level of education. After conducting this study, it is evident that more research is needed to identify how social workers can effectively support second generation young adult Latinos with low self-esteem, low academic attainment and who have experienced violence in school.

## INTRODUCTION

### Significance of Study

This study aims to inform social workers and mental health practitioners of possible interventions related to social support and educational involvement. To promote psychological well-being of Latino immigrant children with a poor education and who have experienced violence in school in order to have a positive impact on their self-esteem.

### Purpose of Research

The purpose of this research is to study the effects of violence in school (gang association, personal safety, fights between racial/ethnic groups, and personal involvement in fights) and low academic attainment on the self-esteem of second-generation immigrant Latino children.

### Research Questions

- 1) What effect does the educational attainment of second generational children with parents from Mexico have on their self-esteem?
- 2) What effect does violence in school have on the self-esteem of second-generation Latino immigrants?

### Hypothesis

- 1) The current study hypothesized that a low academic attainment negatively impacts the self-esteem of second generational Latinos.
- 2) The study also hypothesized that high levels of violence in school is associated with low self-esteem.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Theoretical Framework: Ecological Theory

This theory is primarily concerned with the interdependence and interaction of humans and their environment. This model proposes that human development is influenced through events in higher order social ecosystems and their impact on events in lower order social ecosystems (Boxer et al., 2013).

### Gaps

A gap in the literature that is imperative to acknowledge in this review is the lack of research and studies done on second-generation Latinos specifically.

## METHODOLOGY

### Research Design and Data Collection Procedures

- The present study is a secondary analysis of the data from Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study (CILS) which was carried from 1991 to 2006 in San Diego, CA and Ft. Lauderdale and Miami, FL.
- The goal of CILS was to study the adaptation process of second-generation immigrants.
- Although the original study used longitudinal design only one specific wave of the longitudinal study (the first follow-up survey) was used, making this research study cross-sectional.
- The mode of data collection were face-to-face interviews and paper and pencil interviews (PAPI).
- The first follow-up survey was conducted in 1995 and it included 125 questions. It retrieved 4,288 respondents or 81.5% of the original sample.
- The first follow-up survey was conducted when the respondents were about to graduate from high school.

### Sample and Sampling Method

- The participants of the present study are immigrant second generation children born in the United States with at least one parent born in Mexico. There were also some participants with Mexico heritage who were born abroad but brought to the United States when they were very young. The participants of this data are female and males.
- The average age of this group is 17. The data was gathered just prior to their high school graduation (or dropping out of school).
- In total, there are 552 participants in this group. There are 275 males and 277 females.

### Measures

- Self-esteem was measured by 10 questions of Rosenberg's Self Esteem Scale (1965). Participants responded to the questions with 4-point Likert responses scales ranging from agree a lot (1) to disagree a lot (4).
- Academic attainment assessed for the participants attainable educational level, and grade point average (GPA). This variable was measured using a five-point Likert scale (1 = less than high school, 2 = finish high school, 3 = finish some college, 4 = finish college, and 5 = finish graduate degree.)
- School safety is the second independent variable. There are three items measured using a four-point Likert scale. The three items include: Don't feel safe in school, fights between racial/ethnic groups, and many gangs in school. Items are scored on a scale of (1) = agree a lot, (2) = agree a little, (3) = disagree a little, and (4) = disagree a lot.

## RESULTS

### Spearman's Rho Correlation

- A Spearman rho correlation coefficient was computed to examine the relationship between grade point average and self-esteem. The results indicated a positive and statistically significant association,  $r_s(432) = .185, p < .001$ .
- The relationship between school safety and self-esteem was also examined using a Spearman rho correlation analysis. There was a positive and statistically significant association,  $r_s(431) = .162, p < .001$ . Table 2 demonstrates these results.
- Figure 1 demonstrates that the higher the grade point average then the higher the self-esteem will be. There is upward mobility shown in the scatter plot below between grade point average and self-esteem.

Table 2

Correlations Analysis of Self-Esteem, School Safety, and Grade Point Average

Independent and Dependent Variables	$r_s$	$df$	$p$
Self-Esteem and School Safety	.162	431	<.001
Self-Esteem and Grade Point Average	.185	432	<.001

### Kruska-Wallis H Test

- A Kruska-Wallis H test was conducted comparing mean self-esteem scores among study participants and attainable education levels. A significant result was found ( $H(4) = 20.22, p < .000$ ), indicating that the five levels of education differed from each other. Follow-up pairwise comparisons indicated students that had a lower level of education like completed less than high school ( $Mean Rank = 335.50$ ) had a significantly lower self-esteem than students who had a higher level of education like finish high school ( $Mean Rank = 191.88$ ). There was a significant difference between participants who finished some college ( $Mean Rank = 189.37$ ) and those who finished college ( $Mean Rank = 214.78$ ). Participants who finished a graduate degree had a high self-esteem ( $Mean Rank = 285.08$ ).
- Figure 2 shows the relationship between attainable educational level and self-esteem.

Table 1

Characteristic	$f$	%
Respondent sex		
Male	275	49.8
Female	277	50.2
Student's grade		
Eighth grade	349	63.2
Ninth grade	203	36.8
Respondent age	$M=14.19$	$SD=.886$
Father's highest educational level		
Elementary school or less	156	28.3
Middle school or less	87	15.8
Some high school	63	11.4
High school graduate	92	16.7
Some college/university	32	5.8
College graduate or more	27	4.9
Mother's highest educational level		
Elementary school or less	189	34.2
Middle school or less	102	18.5
Some high school	81	14.7
High school graduate	66	12.0
Some college/university	32	5.8
College graduate or more	17	3.1
Family current economic situation		
Wealthy	37	6.7
Upper-middle class	131	23.7
Lower-middle class	226	40.9
Working class	136	24.6
Poor	11	2.0
Respondent preferred speaking language		
English	205	37.1
Spanish	344	62.3
Spanglish	1	0.2

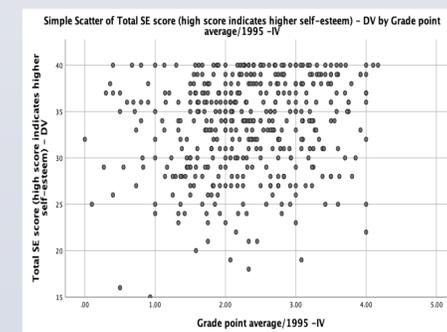


Figure 1: Scatter Plot

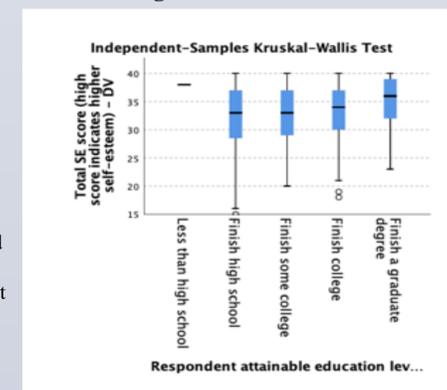


Figure 2.

## DISCUSSIONS

### Summary of Findings

The results of the current study support that the higher the grade point average (GPA), then the higher the self-esteem will be for a Latino immigrant student. The significant relationship between GPA and self-esteem is consistent with the literature on the impact of school grades on the self-esteem of Latino adolescents. These results positively support the hypothesis for the current research study.

The current findings support the hypothesis that a low self-esteem is associated with high levels of violence in school. Student victimization by other students affects the students' mental health and self-esteem (Chen & Wei, 2010).

The results of the current study indicate that students that had a lower level of education had a significantly lower self-esteem than students who had a higher level of education. These findings are consistent with previous studies. Previous studies conclude self-esteem enhancement is associated with improvement in a person's academic achievement. These findings support the hypothesis that a low educational attainment negatively impacts the self-esteem of second-generation Latinos.

### Implications of Research

After conducting this study, it is evident that more research is needed to identify how social workers can effectively support second generation young adult Latinos with low self-esteem, low academic attainment and who have experienced violence in school.

### Strengths

The current study contained a variety of strengths including gathering data from cities where there is a large population of immigrants, surveys were conducted mostly via self-administered questionnaires in school, which ensured the participants autonomy, and the follow-up survey used for the purpose of this study is not seriously biased with respect to the original survey.

### Limitations

- A limitation to efficiently gather the finest data for this study was that most peer-reviewed scholarly articles did not include all three variables (self-esteem, violence in school, and educational attainment).
- Even when the articles would examine two variables it was difficult to gather data from that article because it did not focus on Latino youth.

## REFERENCES

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