

ETHNOCULTURAL VARIABLES AND ATTITUDES TOWARD CULTURAL SOCIALIZATION OF CHILDREN

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Cultural socialization is the transmission of cultural values and norms to one's children. The current study presents a new scale to assess parental socialization attitudes to both the U.S. American culture and the Latino culture. The scale is based on a social cognitive model of cultural socialization and cultural values of independence and interdependence. It was hypothesized that individuals who have lower acculturation, more recent generation level, and higher Mexican identity would have higher scores on the Latino cultural socialization scale and lower scores on the U.S. American cultural socialization scale. A sample of parents who were college students completed a survey, which included ethnocultural variables and the cultural socialization scale (CSS). A MANOVA with criterion variables, U.S. American cultural socialization and Latino cultural socialization, and the following predictor variables: acculturation level, generation level, Mexican identity, White American identity, and socioeconomic status. Results indicate that the scale is reliable and partially support the hypotheses that ethnocultural variables influence attitudes toward cultural socialization

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of children; thus providing some evidence for construct validity. Less acculturated parents emphasize socialization into both the Latino culture and the U.S. culture. Individuals with high Mexican cultural identity were more likely to agree with the Latino socialization items. Further research is needed to investigate the implications for biculturalism if parents socialize their children to more than one culture. © 2000 John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Mainstream developmental psychology has begun to incorporate cultural components into the study of socialization of children (Greenfield, 1993; Greenfield & Cocking, 1994). In fact, several researchers have called for further investigation into the cultural socialization of children and its impact on development (Bowman & Howard, 1985; Knight & Bernal, 1993; Phinney & Chavira, 1995; Sanders-Thompson, 1994; Thornton, Chatters, Taylor, & Allen, 1990). Knight and colleagues (1993) have designed a social cognitive model of enculturation of children based on their empirical work with children's ethnic identity development. Their model of cultural socialization emphasizes the importance of family ecology and parental attitudes in socializing the child into their cultural group. The current study presents a new scale to assess parent attitudes toward cultural socialization of their children, based on Knight et al.'s social cognitive model. The purpose of this study is twofold: (1) to assess the psychometric properties of a new scale; (2) to assess the association between ethnocultural variables and cultural socialization for purposes of construct validation.

Enculturation is the normative socialization into culture that children of all cultures experience (Knight, Bernal, Cota, Garza, & Ocampo, 1993). These experiences of enculturation teach the child skills, behavioral competencies, values, language, and cultural identity (Bernal, Knight, Garza, Ocampo, & Cota, 1990; Knight et al., 1993; Miller & Miller, 1990). The social cognitive model of cultural development by Knight et al. (1993) emphasizes the effects of family ecology including family background, family structure, and effects of familial socialization agents. Based on the tenets of the social learning theory, transmittal of cultural can occur through many different means, such as reinforcement, modeling, identification, etc. It is primarily through the family that this process occurs based on group patterns of values, social customs, perceptions, behavioral roles, language usage, and rules of social interaction (Phinney & Rotheram, 1987). Based on this socialization model by Knight et al. (1993), parental attitudes and family cultural economy should have a direct effect on the cultural socialization of the child. Knight et al. (1993) emphasize the importance of family ecology, such as parental acculturation level, generation level, and identification, in the attitudes toward children's socialization. The cultural socialization scale was developed in order to measure parent attitudes toward socializing their children into U.S. American culture and/or Latino culture. In particular, the scale focuses on inclusion of the constructs of ethnic knowledge, ethnic social preference, and ethnic role behaviors that parents may pass on to their children.

Knight and colleagues state that values are an important element of socialization. Developmental psychologists have described an essential aspect of culture in the values of individualism and collectivism (Greenfield & Cocking, 1994). Latino culture can be defined as a collectivist, or interdependent perspective, where the self is viewed as interdependent and relationships with others are paramount (Markus & Kityama, 1991; Triandis, 1989). In contrast, U.S. American culture has been described as an individualistic or independent perspective that focuses on the self in isolation and the separateness of dis-

tinct persons (Markus & Kityama, 1991; Triandis, 1989). Therefore, the independent/interdependent perspective should be a central element of cultural socialization. Items are included in the cultural socialization scale that should have relevance for the Latino culture, such as orientation towards personal relationships over individual goals, and the importance of family interactions and family roles.

There is evidence that some individuals experience enculturation into more than one culture, the dominant mainstream culture and the native culture of their ethnic group (Cuéllar, Arnold, & Maldonado, 1995; Knight et al., 1993; LaFrombois, Coleman, & Gerton, 1993; Oetting & Beauvais, 1990–91). There is evidence that some individuals in ethnic groups, such as Mexican Americans, often are bicultural (Felix-Ortiz, et al., 1994). Previous research indicates that identification with U.S. American culture and Latino culture may be independent of each other, i.e., they are not opposite ends of a linear continuum (Arroyo & Romero, under review; Oetting & Beauvais, 1990–91). We argue that these dual aspects of cultural socialization should be assessed, U.S. American mainstream culture and Latino culture, if the population of interest is individuals of Latino descent who live in the United States.

A cultural socialization scale (CSS) has been developed based on these principles of cultural socialization and cultural values (Knight et al., 1993; Markus & Kityama, 1991). The CSS scale measures parental attitudes toward socializing their children into Latino culture and/or U.S. American culture independently of each other. The primary purpose of the current study is to assess the psychometric properties of this scale, such as reliability and validity.

Empirical research suggests that parents socialize their children consistent with their cultural beliefs, behaviors, and socioeconomic situation (Zayas & Solari, 1994). We hypothesized that acculturation level, socioeconomic status, and positive cultural identity would be factors associated with cultural socialization attitudes. The criterion variables were U.S. American socialization and Latino socialization. The predictor variables were parent's acculturation level, generation level, cultural identity, and socioeconomic status. It was hypothesized that individuals who have a lower acculturation level, lower generation level, higher Mexican cultural identity, and lower socioeconomic status would have higher Latino cultural socialization and lower U.S. American cultural socialization. We hypothesized that there would be an interaction effect between acculturation level and socioeconomic status, such that individuals who are of higher socioeconomic status and higher acculturation level would have higher U.S. American socialization and lower Latino socialization when compared to those with low socioeconomic status and low acculturation level.

METHODS

Participants

All participants were student volunteers from the University of Texas Pan-American (UTPA) in Edinburg, Texas. In 1996 UTPA's total enrollment was 11,800 of which 89% of students were Latino. Of the approximately 3,500 freshmen enrolled in the spring 1996 semester, Cultural Identity surveys were completed and returned by 1,946 students. In the analyses for this paper only students who were parents and who were of Mexican descent were included in the analyses ($n = 244$). Average age for this sample was 27 years and ranged from 17–63 years. Descriptive information can be found on Table 1.

Table 1. Sample Characteristics

	<i>N</i>	%
Gender		
Male	91	34%
Female	177	66%
Self-report Ethnic Label		
European American	13	5%
Mexican American	211	87%
Mexican	20	8%
Generation Level		
First generation	33	14%
Second generation	94	40%
Third generation	10	4%
Fourth generation	55	24%
Fifth generation	42	18%
Marital Status		
Single	39	15%
Married	177	66%
Widow/Divorced/Separated	51	19%
Perceived SES		
Worse off	50	18%
About the same	141	53%
Better off	75	33%

Measures

Several measures of demographic status were included in the Cultural Identity Survey, such as gender, ethnic label, marital status, and age. In order to assess socioeconomic status (SES), participants were asked to compare the financial situation of their family to other families (Gore, Aseltine, & Colton, 1992). Responses to this item ranged from 1 = much worse off to 5 = much better off. Generational status was assessed from self-reports of origin of nativity for self, parents, and grandparents. The results for generation status were then dichotomized into immigrants and non-immigrants. Immigrants were defined as those who were not born in the United States and non-immigrants as those who were born in the United States.

Acculturation. Scale I of the Acculturation Rating for Mexican Americans-II (ARSMA-II) was used to assess acculturation (Cuéllar, Arnold, & Maldonado, 1995). The 30 acculturation items assessed language preferences, behaviors, parental identification, peer ethnicity, and personal identification. These items previously have demonstrated good internal reliability, $\alpha = .85$ (Cuéllar et al., 1995). The responses range from 1 = (not at all) to 5 = (extremely often or almost always). Responses were grouped into acculturation levels based on an algorithm developed specifically for the ARSMA-II that combines scores on the Mexican Orientation Scale (MOS) and scores on the Anglo Orientation Scale (AOS) (Cuéllar, et al., 1995). We dichotomized acculturation levels into level one, low acculturation, and level two, high acculturation.

Cultural Identity. Cultural identity was measured with four item version of the cultural identification scale designed by Oetting and Beauvais (1990–91) to measure orthogonal identification of White American (European American) identity and Mexican identity.

Responses were based on a four point Likert scale ranging from 1 = not at all to 4 = a lot. Mean cultural identification scores for the Mexican and White cultures were arrived at by averaging responses to the four items, these responses were then dichotomized based on the median score into high identification and low identification. Reliability analysis indicated that both the White American Scale and the Mexican Scale had good internal reliability, respectively $\alpha = .84$ and $\alpha = .85$.

Cultural Socialization. The CSS assessed parent attitudes toward cultural socialization to the U.S. American culture and to Latino culture. One item assessed whether respondents had children or not. Items based on the social cognitive model of cultural socialization by Knight et al. (1993) reflect constructs of ethnic knowledge (traditions/culture/history/holidays), ethnic social preference (preference for friends and neighborhood), and ethnic role behaviors (speaking Spanish or English). The constructs of independence and interdependence of Markus and Kityama (1991) and Triandis (1989) also were used as a basis for the development of items such as “values personal relationships over individual goals,” “learns importance of family relations,” and “respects elders.” Participants were asked “how often do you stress (emphasize) that your child . . .” Responses to these items were based on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = not at all to 5 = a lot. Items related to U.S. American Cultural Socialization (ACS) were averaged for a total score, and items related to Latino Cultural Socialization (LCS) were also averaged for a total score. Nineteen questions assessing attitudes, behaviors, and values toward cultural socialization of children were used. There are 8 total items in the ACS scale and 11 total items in the LCS scale.

Procedure

Freshman university students were administered the Cultural Identity Survey in their English classes during the Spring of 1996. The study was approved by the Human Subjects Review committee of University of Texas-Pan American, and signed consent was obtained. Students were informed that their participation was completely voluntary and would not affect their class standing in any way. The self-administered questionnaire required approximately 45 minutes to complete.

RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics

Analyses were conducted with the SPSS statistical package. Sample characteristics are provided for gender, generation level, ethnic label, socioeconomic status, and marital status, in Table 1.

One-way ANOVAs were conducted in order to test for demographic differences (gender, age, marital status, generation level, SES, and ethnic label) on the cultural socialization scale (see Table 2). For the ACS there were no significant differences for ethnic labels, generation level, marital status, SES, age, or gender. For the LCS there were no significant differences for marital status, SES, age, or gender. There were significant differences on the LCS for ethnic groups ($F(2,165) = 8.64, p < .0003$), and generation level ($F(4, 159) = 8.85, p < .00001$). Bonferroni post hoc tests indicated that European

Table 2. Descriptive Results for Ethnocultural Variables

	ACS	LCS
Self-report Ethnic Label		
European American	2.31	3.03*** ^a
Mexican American	2.43	3.75
Mexican	2.48	4.18** ^b
Generation Level		
First generation	2.58	4.03*** ^c
Second generation	2.42	3.97*** ^c
Third generation	2.46	3.23
Fourth generation	2.33	3.67
Fifth generation	2.47	3.29
Marital Status		
Single	1.38	3.75
Married	2.39	3.79
Widow/Divorced/Separated	2.42	3.61
Perceived SES		
Worse off	2.42	3.76
About the same	2.49	3.77
Better off	2.39	3.69
Gender		
Male	2.45	3.81
Female	2.45	3.70

Note. ** $p < .001$; *** $p < .00001$.

^aEuropean American group was significantly lower on the LCS than other ethnic groups.

^bMexican group agreed significantly more than the Mexican American group.

^cFirst and second generation were significantly higher on LCS than 3rd or 5th generation.

Americans agreed significantly less with the LCS items than either Mexicans or Mexican Americans. Mexicans agreed more than Mexican Americans did on the LCS. Bonferroni post hoc tests indicated that the first generation agreed significantly more with the LCS items than the third or fifth generation; second generation agreed more than the third and fifth generation with LCS items.

Scale Factor Structure

A varimax rotation with principal axis factor extraction was performed on the CSS in order to assess the structure of the factors within each subscale. Items were considered to form a scale if they loaded higher than .30 on one factor and lower than .30 on the other factors (Tabachnick and Fidell, 1996). Preliminary results indicate that a three-factor solution was most appropriate for the ACS, accounting for 74.1% of the variance. The first factor (41% of variance) was composed of language and holidays (range = .79–.91). The second factor (16.6% of variance) was composed of cultural history, traditions, and pride (range = .75–.90). The third factor (16.5% of variance) was composed of ethnic social preferences (range = .83–.84). All eight items loaded onto the three factors.

Results for the LCS indicate that a four factor solution was most appropriate, accounting for 65% of the variance. The first factor (29.5% of variance) was composed of ethnic social preferences, traditions, and cultural history (range = .65–.84). The second

factor (13.3% of variance) was composed of importance of interdependent values (range = .50–.79). The fourth factor (9.6% of variance) was only composed of the one discrimination item (.91), and therefore was dropped from further analyses of the LCS because it did not load with any other items in the scale. All further use of the LCS included only 10 items, after the discrimination item was dropped.

Internal Reliabilities

Alpha reliability correlations were conducted to test the internal reliability of the ACS and the LCS items. Both scales demonstrated good internal reliability. Using eight items for the revised ACS reliability was $\alpha = .78$. Using ten items for the revised LCS reliability was $\alpha = .73$.

Analysis of Hypotheses

Results of evaluation of assumptions of normality, homogeneity of variance-covariance matrices, linearity, and multicollinearity were satisfactory. A between-subjects factorial MANOVA was performed on two dependent variables, ACS and LCS, with six independent variables: acculturation, generation, Mexican identity, White American identity, and SES (see Table 3). We hypothesized that there would be an interaction effect between acculturation level and socioeconomic status. There was not a significant interaction, so the main effects were investigated. We hypothesized that there would be a main effect for generation level and identity, such that individuals closer to the Latino culture would be more likely to endorse LCS and less likely to endorse ACS. The main effects for SES, white identity, and generation level were not significant. Main effects for Mexican identity and acculturation were significant and direct discriminant function analyses were conducted as follow up tests.

One discriminant function was calculated which maximally separated high acculturated individuals from low acculturated individuals. The loading matrix of correlations between predictors and discriminant functions suggests that the best predictors for acculturation levels were both ACS and LCS, with a slightly higher correlation for LCS (.69) than ACS (.30). Individuals of lower acculturation levels tended to score higher on the ACS ($M = 2.58$) and the LCS ($M = 4.00$) than those of higher acculturation, ACS ($M = 2.36$) and LCS ($M = 3.58$).

Direct discriminant function analysis found one discriminant function that maximally separated levels of Mexican identity using ACS and LCS as the predictors. The

Table 3. Results of MANOVA With ACS and LCS as Dependent Variables

	<i>Wilk's lambda</i>	<i>F (DF)</i>	<i>p value</i>
SES* Acculturation	.98	.82 (4,258)	.515
SES	.95	1.63 (4,258)	.166
Acculturation	.92	5.88 (2,129)	.004**
Mexican Identity	.94	4.44 (2,129)	.014*
White Identity	.99	.53 (2,129)	.587
Generation Level	.99	.16 (2,129)	.852

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

loading matrix of correlations was primarily composed of LCS (.91); whereas ACS added little to the function ($-.003$). There were no differences in means for ACS for high or low Mexican identity. Individuals with higher Mexican identity scores higher on the LCS ($M = 4.06$) than those with lower Mexican identity, LCS ($M = 3.57$).

DISCUSSION

The purpose of the present study was to assess the psychometric properties of the CSS and to investigate the association between reports on ethnocultural variables and attitudes towards cultural socialization. Our findings suggest that the ACS and the LCS are reliable subcomponents of the cultural socialization scale. These results indicate that although there is strong internal consistency within the items for each scale, there also may be distinct factors that represent various elements of socialization. Although the items were developed to be parallel between the U.S. scale and the Latino scale, the factors were different for the two subscales. The U.S. scale factors had ethnic social preference separate from other factors, and in the Latino scale ethnic social preference was grouped with maintaining traditions and learning cultural history. It seems that respondents associated maintaining Latino traditions and learning about their culture with having Latino friends and living in a neighborhood with other Latinos; yet ethnic social preference was not associated with learning U.S. traditions and history. Additionally, while questions for interdependence were included in the Latino scale there were not directly parallel items for independence included on the U.S. scale. This is a limitation of the scale in its current form; items for independence should be developed and included in future use of this cultural socialization scale.

Our hypothesis that individuals who have a lower acculturation level, lower generation level, higher Mexican cultural identity, and lower socioeconomic status would be more likely to have higher scores on Latino Cultural Socialization and lower scores on U.S. American cultural socialization was partially supported. Results for generation level and socioeconomic status were not significant. Our hypothesis that there would be an interaction between acculturation and socioeconomic status was not supported. In the current study, perceived SES was measured which may not a completely accurate assessment of actual socioeconomic status.

It is possible that generation level was not significant because values and orientation towards Latino and U.S. culture may not vary that much over generation levels, instead it is more a factor of acculturation than generation. Additionally, sample surveyed was from the border area of Texas, this is a location in which individuals are able to maintain their culture of origin over many generations due to the proximity of the country of origin.

Results indicate that individuals who report high Mexican identity and low acculturation were more likely to endorse Latino socialization with their children. As expected individuals who are not acculturated to the U.S. are more likely to emphasize socialization to their culture of origin. However, it is intriguing that Mexican identity, or identification with the Mexican culture, also was predictive of higher scores on the Latino socialization scales. Symbolizing that the identification with culture of origin can be very strong predictor along with the behaviors and attitudes represented in most measures of acculturation. Construct validity, thus, appears to be strong between Mexican identification, acculturation, and the Latino socialization scale. Our hypotheses were supported to the extent that high Mexican identity and low acculturation levels predicted that par-

ents would place more importance on the socialization of their children to Latino culture. Additionally, results indicated that there were significant differences for the LCS based on generation level and ethnic label, such that European Americans agreed significantly less with Latino socialization than individuals of Mexican descent. Also, individuals of first and second generation were more likely to agree with LCS than individuals of later generations, consistent with acculturation findings that later generations are less likely to speak Spanish or have knowledge of their culture of origin. Therefore, it does appear that family ecology, as represented by Mexican orientation ethnocultural variables, influences attitudes toward Latino cultural socialization, as expected.

The hypothesis was not supported for the ACS. It seems that there are few differences in attitudes towards U.S. socialization based on demographics, such as gender, generation, and ethnic label and identity. Counter to what was hypothesized, results indicated that less acculturated individuals were more likely to agree more with the U.S. socialization scale. Less acculturated parents may feel that it is important for their children to “fit in” with the U.S. American culture so that they can have a better future and socialize them with this perspective. It is possible that there is a sample bias driving this result, because the sample is comprised of college students; these individuals may have different attitudes towards the U.S. than individuals who are not involved in the U.S. institutions.

A separate study of Mexican ethnic identity in focus group interviews with adults of Mexican descent reported similar comments from parents, stating that they wanted their children to learn English and learn more about the U.S. American culture (Niemann, Romero, Arredondo, & Rodriguez, 1995). There may be a very interesting developmental cycle at work within generations of families undergoing acculturation, in that low acculturation parents encourage their children to value and learn American culture. The socialization may be cyclical in that the next generation of children may be engaging in what Spindler and Spindler (1990) refer to as “reaffirmative adaptation” wherein younger members of minority groups try to recreate and sustain via socialization practices a Latino way of life. This may be a worthwhile direction for future research to pursue a greater understanding of biculturality and the process of acculturation over generation levels. It has been suggested that the encouragement of a positive group image will help children cope if they encounter discrimination or prejudice based on their culture (Harrison, Wilson, Pine, Chan, & Buriel, 1990; Sanders-Thompson, 1994; Zayas & Solari, 1994). There is evidence from Tajfel’s (1982) social identity theory that a positive group image will help maintain an individual’s personal self-esteem. Therefore, this research may be informative for understanding self-esteem in certain ethnic groups.

Our data shed light on attitudes toward socialization of children to different cultures, although this study was primarily descriptive. One limitation of this study is the population surveyed. The sample was mainly comprised of college students, and may not be an accurate representation of the Mexican community from the local area. Future studies should consider simultaneously surveying the children to directly investigate the association between parental attitudes and children’s attitudes. Additionally, this scale was designed to be used with individuals of any Latino background (Latino is a pan-ethnic term similar to Hispanic); however the present sample was of one subgroup, Mexican descent. Future research might compare and contrast differences between sub-groups of Latinos. Overall, the results of the present study provide impetus for further research on the relation between cultural socialization of children and family ecology.

In summary, results suggest that the psychometric properties of the CSS are good. There was evidence of good reliability and construct validity for the Latino cultural socialization scale; however items on independence should be included. Future studies should consider using the cultural socialization scale in order to understand further children's development. The scale may have application in development psychology in the understanding of culture in traditional developmental theories. One potential application in cultural psychology may be better understanding of the development of cultural constructs in children and the ability of parents to influence the cultural attitudes, cultural behaviors, and cultural identification of their children. Additionally, this socialization scale should be useful in understanding how culture is transmitted between generations and may help explain why generational differences in acculturation and identification occur. Cultural socialization is a construct that can help elucidate the understanding of acculturation and cultural identity as a process, not just an outcome.

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