



Comparing Cultural Variability of Parent Educational Expectations and Emotional Distress Across Latin American and Asian Immigrant Cultural Groups



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Background

- Culture may influence how children emotionally responds to their immigrant parents' expectations (Qin, 2009).
- Yet, it is uncertain whether the outcomes of the same emotional distress measure in two distinct cultural groups as a function of parental educational expectations will capture cultural variability (Agliata & Renk, 2009; Beck & Beamesderfer, 1974; Derogatis, 1993).
- This problem potentially effects the largest two immigrant groups in the U.S.: Latin American (52.2%, 23,340,300) and Asian (31.1%, 13,957,100) immigrants (Migration Policy Institute, 2020).

Theoretical Framework

- **Family Systems Theory** (Broderick, 1993):
 - FST explains how families' unique variabilities such as culture can influence the self-regulation in families; but fails to explain non-compliance.
- **Self-Discrepancy Theory** (Higgins, 1987):
 - SDT explains that non-compliance can produce distress for family members.
 - This is particularly true for significant motivators such as parents in the parent-child relationship.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to determine if culture influences the relationship between parent educational expectations and emotional distress across Latin American and Asian immigrant families in the U.S.

Hypotheses:

- H1:** Emotional distress will differ by immigrant cultural groups.
- H2:** The relationship between parent educational expectations and emotional distress will differ by immigrant cultural groups.

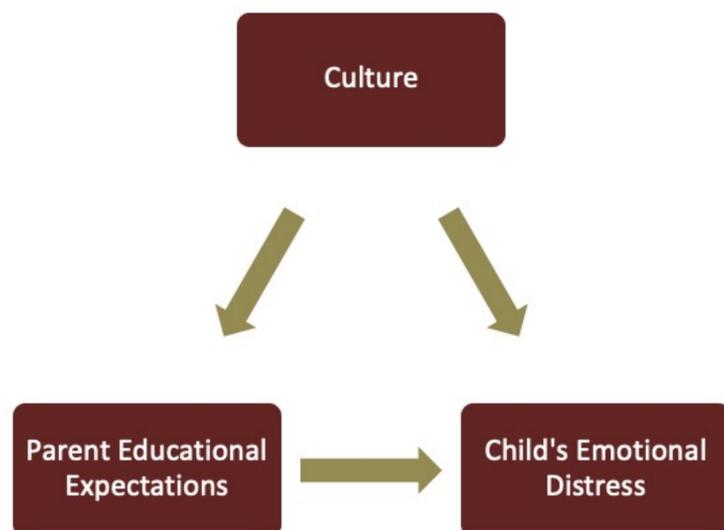


Figure 1. Conceptual Model. Culture includes Cuban and Philippine children of immigrant cultural groups.

Study Design

- We conducted a secondary data analysis of the **CILS dataset** (Portes & Rumbaut, 2006).
- **Sample:** Study participants included N = 1,308, Cuban (58.3%) and Philippine (41.7%) children of immigrants from Southern states in the U.S. Participants were on average age 13.94 years, mostly male (62.8%) and had an average GPA of 2.64.
- **Procedures:** Data analyses included descriptive statistics and Ordinary Least Squares Regression.

Measures

Parent Educational Expectations: (M = 9.33, SD = 1.32) 1 item with a 11-point, categorical range. Ex: "How far in school do you expect your child to go?"

***Parent Educational Involvement:** sum score with 3 items (alpha = .63, M = 2.13, SD = 1.01). Yes = 1, No = 0. Ex: "Belong to a parent-teacher organization?"

***Parent Rules About Child School Activity:** sum score, 2 items (alpha = .60, M = 1.83, SD = .47). Yes = 1, No = 0. Ex: "Are there family rules for maintaining a certain grade point average?"

***Parent Talk about School:** sum score, 2 items (alpha = .76, M = 5.59, SD = .87) with a 4-point range. Ex: "How often do you or your spouse/partner talk with your child about his or her experiences in school?"

Parent Help With Homework: 1 item (M = 1.50, SD = 1.28) with a 4-point scale Ex: "How often do you or your spouse/ partner help your child with his or her homework?"

***Emotional Distress:** *Depression*, sum score of 4 items (alpha = .75, M = 6.58, SD = 2.51) (CES-D; Radloff, 1977), on a 4- point Likert-scale. Ex: "For each answer, how often have you felt this way during the past week? I felt sad."

Notes: *Higher scores indicated more of the variable. All indicators were recoded for easier interpretability. Only one aspect of emotional distress (i.e., depression) was included in the CILS dataset (Portes & Rumbaut, 2006).

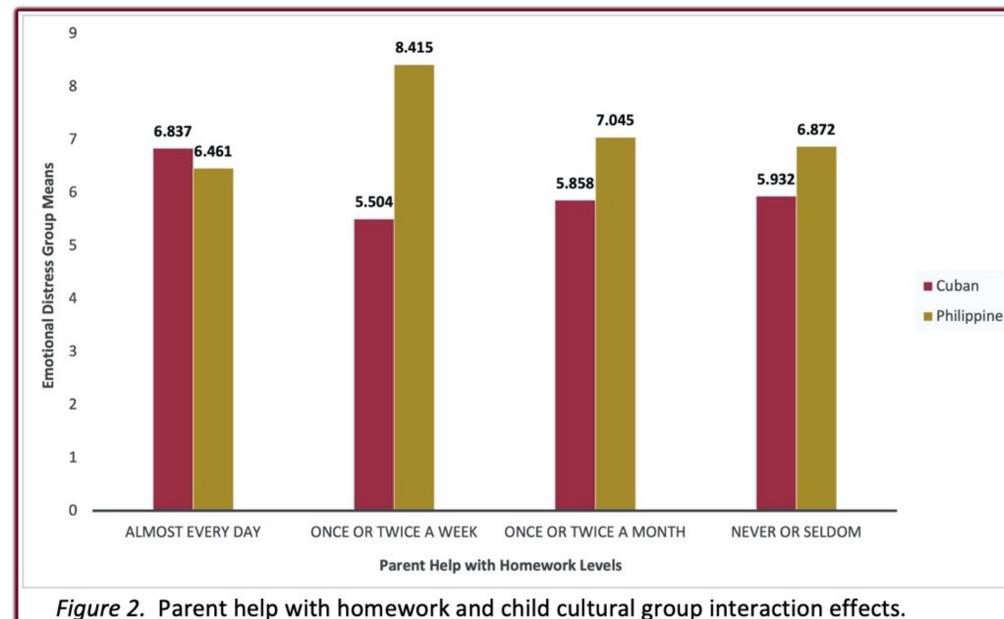


Figure 2. Parent help with homework and child cultural group interaction effects.

Key Results

- We found Philippine children experienced .587 units of emotional distress more than Cuban children.
- We also found significant group mean differences in the interaction of parent help with homework, and child perception of parents' educational expectations across immigrant cultural groups.
- Lastly, the interaction between parent help with homework and child cultural group predicted emotional distress for Cuban and Philippine children.

Variables	Total Sample (N = 1,308)		Cuban Sub-sample (N = 762)		Philippine Sub-sample (N = 546)	
	Means	SD	Means	SD	Means	SD
Child Emotional Distress	6.58	2.51	6.23	2.18	7.06	2.83
Parent Educational Expectations	9.33	1.32	9.33	1.52	9.32	.97
Parent Educational Involvement	2.13	1.01	2.34	.89	1.83	1.09
Log Parent Talk About School*	.10	.87	.05	.14	.17	.21
Parent Help With Homework	1.50	1.28	1.80	1.26	1.08	1.20
Child Cultural Group	.42	.49	.00	.00	1.00	.00
Child Perception of Parent's Educational Expectations	4.57	.72	4.58	.76	4.56	.67

Note. *Descriptive statistics include variable Log transformation. Non-imputed data reported. Demographic and covariate variables excluded from table.

Variables	Unstandardized B	SE
Constant	7.91***	1.62
Parent Educational Expectations (PEE)	-.20**	.07
Child Cultural Group (CCG)	.59**	.19
Interactions		
PHH * CCG	-.25*	.12
CPPEE * CCG	.78***	.23

Note. R Squared = .12. Adjusted R Squared = .11. Standard Error (SE) = 2.35. Results from imputation number 5. Model 3. Non significant coefficients, demographic and covariate variables excluded from table.
* p < .05 ; ** p < .01 ; *** p < .001

Conclusions

- The importance of cultural group differences is underscored in the parent expectation-child emotional distress relationship.
- Future research is needed to examine why parent help with homework was aversive for Cuban child emotional well-being.
- Providers must consider cultural differences when treating children of immigrants and pay particular attention to which type of educational expectations parents use with their children; and their children's perception of parent's educational expectations.