

Latinx Mothers' Perceptions of Chaos, Acculturation, and Parenting Stress

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Introduction

Parenting stress has been conceptualized as a mismatch between perceived demands of parenting and available resources to meet those demands (Abidin, 1992). Additionally, past research has shown that chaotic home environments are a key stressor for mothers of young children (Nelson et al., 2009). However, ecocultural research is needed to understand this association among culturally and linguistically diverse families.

The present study examined the relation between Latinx mothers' perceptions of home chaos and their parenting stress, as well as the potential moderating role of acculturative stress. Acculturation is a key component in understanding the experiences of Latinx parents (Malkoff et al., 2019). Acculturation has been known as the process by which an individual undergoes cultural change across several life domains as the result of continuous exposure to a second culture. We hypothesized that the presence of acculturative stress would exacerbate the negative impact of chaos on parenting stress.

Research Question:

Does home chaos relate to parenting stress amongst Latinx mothers and is this association moderated by acculturation factors, specifically intercultural relations and cultural isolation?

Method

Participants:

Participants included nineteen mothers, all Spanish-speaking from Mexico (62.5%) and El Salvador (37.5%), who participated in a larger study on home noise and child language among Spanish-speaking families. Average family income was \$65,000 per year, and most families had more than 5 total members in the home.

Procedures and Methods:

Mothers completed questionnaires to report on their perceptions of home chaos using the Chaos Hubbub and Order Scale, their acculturative stress using the Riverside Acculturation Stress Inventory, and their parenting stress using the Parenting Daily Hassles Scale.

- **Home Chaos** (Confusion, Hubbub and Order Scale; Matheny et al., 1995) 15 items, $\alpha=.84$
 - Example item: "There is often a fuss going on at our home"
- **Acculturative Stress** (Riverside Acculturation Stress Inventory; Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005) 15 items total, 2 subscales used in the current study: intercultural relations (3 items, $\alpha=.86$) and cultural isolation (3 items, $\alpha=.62$)
 - Intercultural relations example item: "I feel that my particular cultural practices have caused conflict in my relationships"
 - Cultural isolation example item: "I feel that there are not enough Hispanic/Latino people in my living environment"
- **Parenting Stress** (Parenting Daily Hassles Scale; Crnic & Greenberg, 1990) 20 items, $\alpha=.94$
 - Example item: "The kids resist or struggle with you over bed-time"

Results

A linear regression analysis was applied to explore these relations while controlling for family income, which was positively related to home chaos. We created interaction terms to test for moderation by centering chaos and acculturation, then multiplying the centered variables.

We found a significant and positive association between mothers' perceptions of home chaos and their reports of parenting stress.

Table 1. Mothers' Perceptions of Home Chaos Predicting Parenting Stress

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta	
Income to needs ratio	-.105	.085	-.296	.237
Home chaos	.879	.309	.683	.012

The acculturation factors of intercultural relations and cultural isolation did not moderate the association between chaos and parenting stress.

Table 2. Interaction Between Chaos and Intercultural Relations Predicting Parenting Stress

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta	
Income to needs ratio	-.109	.094	-.309	.264
Home chaos	1.114	.420	.865	.020
Intercultural relations	-.222	.263	-.255	.413
Chaos X Intercultural relations	.358	.446	.209	.436

Table 3. Interaction Between Chaos and Cultural Isolation Predicting Parenting Stress

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta	
Income to needs ratio	-.167	.088	-.471	.081
Home chaos	1.286	.371	.998	.004
Cultural isolation	-.292	.188	-.411	.144
Chaos X Cultural isolation	-.111	.274	-.090	.693

Discussion

Consistent with past research, mothers who reported greater home chaos also reported experiencing more parenting stress. However, data did not support the hypothesis that intercultural relations and cultural isolation (aspects of acculturative stress) would moderate the association between chaos and parenting stress.

Limitations and Future Directions:

A primary limitation in this study is the relatively small sample size of participants. Future research might explore whether parental generational status would moderate perceptions of home chaos and parenting stress in Latinx families. Because generational status largely affects the impact of acculturative stress, this factor should be taken into consideration while studying bilingual, bicultural families.

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