

EXPLORING LATINO/A/X SIBLING RELATIONSHIPS

Exploring Sibling Relationships in Latino/a/x Immigrant Families

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Thesis submitted to the faculty of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University in
partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Science
In
Human Development

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December 11, 2020
Falls Church, VA

Keywords: Latino/a/x, siblings, acculturation, familism, cultural navigation

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ABSTRACT

Siblings are the longest lasting relationships most individuals may experience in their life. What makes sibling relationships unique is the overlap of both shared and unshared experiences. While there is limited research on the mechanisms behind sibling relationships in general, research on Latino/a/x sibling relationships is even more limited. The limited research on Latino/a/x siblings from immigrant families has found they have an impact on each other's cultural adaptations. The current study explored the influence of the acculturation cultural adaptation processes to the U.S. and how this adaptation may impact Latino/a/x sibling relationships. Semi-structured dyadic interviews were conducted with eight sibling dyads ($N = 8$) and dyadic analysis methods from Tkachuk et al. (2019) were used to analyze the qualitative data. The findings suggest that the sibling relationship is influenced by parental and cultural expectations, unique experiences pertaining to growing up (e.g., sibling positionality), and their shared experiences of growing up in the United States (i.e., shared cultural navigation). Findings regarding the importance of family are congruent with current literature on Latino/a/x immigrant families and a new finding that emerged related to the validation of younger siblings on the experiences of the older siblings. Clinical implications suggest clinicians familiarizing themselves with cross-cultural sibling relationships and the benefits of having siblings in therapy. Limitations and recommendations for future study are discussed.

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GENERAL AUDIENCE ABSTRACT

The Latino/a/x population is among the fastest growing immigrant populations in the United States. There is vast research on immigrant families that emphasize the acculturation processes as crucial to understanding how these families blend multiple cultures. Most of the research of acculturation and its influence on familial relationships focus on parent-child relationships and limited research has been done on the influence of this phenomenon on other family relationships, including sibling relationships. Siblings relationships can be the longest lasting relationship an individual can have in their lifetime and what makes this relationship unique is the overlap of both shared and unshared experiences. The limited research on Latino/a/x siblings from immigrant families has found that siblings have an impact on each other's cultural adaptations. The current study explored the influence of the acculturation cultural adaptation processes to the U.S. and how this adaptation may impact Latino/a/x sibling relationships. Semi-structured dyadic interviews were conducted with eight sibling dyads ($N = 8$) and dyadic analysis methods from Tkachuk et al. (2019) were used to analyze the qualitative data. The study's findings highlight that the sibling relationship is influenced by parental and cultural expectations, unique experiences pertaining to growing up (e.g., sibling positionality), and their shared experiences of growing up in the United States (i.e., shared cultural navigation). Given these findings, clinical implications suggest clinicians familiarizing themselves with cross-cultural sibling relationships and the benefits of having siblings in therapy. Limitations and recommendations for future study are discussed.

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Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge the support I had throughout the process of completing this thesis. First, to the Latino/a/x community for their interest and willingness to learn about this study and for helping magnify the importance of this topic by spreading the word and providing feedback for directions for future studies. I'm grateful to the participants who shared their personal stories of challenges and strength.

Next, I'd like to thank my committee, Dr. Muruthi, Dr. Shivers, and Dr. Landers. Thank you, Dr. Muruthi, for walking along side me during this process. You supported me from the very beginning when this thesis topic was just an idea of mine and you challenged me, and it helped me see my own strength and determination. Dr. Shivers, thank you for your unconditional encouragement. You believed in me, inspired me, and guided me through the end of this journey. And Dr. Landers, thank you for your knowledge and constant presence. You gave me your time and valuable advice and feedback.

Lastly, a special thanks to my family, my friends, my partner, and my cohort members. This was a challenging process, and your encouragement and compassion calmed my mind and warmed my heart. I recognize that I put a lot of hard work into this thesis and I was able to because of those who believed in me, pushed me, and supported me.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

The Problem and it's Setting

The immigrant population in the United States (U.S.) is constantly growing and accounts for about 13.9% of the U.S. population (Budiman, 2020; López & Radford, 2017). The Latino/a/x population is among the fastest growing immigrant populations in the United States with a majority of Latino/a/x children being U.S. born (Batalova et al., 2020; Fry & Passel, 2009). There is vast research on immigrant families that emphasize the acculturation processes as crucial to understanding how Latino/a/x families blend their sending culture (i.e., native or country of origin) with the receiving (i.e., American) culture (Berry, 1997; Berry, 2005; Berry et al., 2006; Berry & Sabatier, 2011). The cultural adaptation process of acculturation has been studied extensively within parent-child relationships (Pyke, 2005; Smokowski et al., 2008; Telzer, 2010), yet limited work has explored this phenomenon within other familial relationships, such as sibling relationships. The current study explored the influence of the acculturation cultural adaptation processes to the U.S. and how this adaptation may impact Latino/a/x sibling relationships.

Berry's model of acculturation indicates there are four paths to culturally adapt when living in a new culture: (1) *assimilation*, which is defined as complete emergence into the receiving culture and loss of their sending culture (Berry, 1997; Berry, 2003); (2) *integration*, which is an incorporation of practices from both sending culture and receiving culture (Berry, 1997; Smokowski et al., 2008); (3) *marginalization*, which is a lack of association with either sending or receiving cultures (Berry, 1997); and *separation*, which is defined as rejection of the receiving culture and maintenance of their sending culture in all its entirety (Berry, 1997; Berry, 2003). In order to follow any one of these four paths, acculturating individuals or groups must

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first consider to what extent they want to maintain and adhere to their culture and to what extent they want to participate in the other culture (Berry, 1997). Within this acculturation framework, the current study will focus on how cultural adherence and cultural participation influence sibling relationships. The research questions are as follows: (1) What is your experience in adapting to U.S. culture?; (2) What is your relationship with your sibling?; and (3) How has your cultural adaptation shaped your relationship with your sibling?

Understanding Latino/a/x Families

Familism. For the purpose of this study, the term Latino/a/x was used in an attempt to include all genders, to remain culturally humble, and to give the participants the option to choose how they identify. Latino/a/x families center their values on familism. Familism comes from the collectivist orientation and emphasizes the importance of family over the individual (Hernández & Bámaca-Colbert, 2016; Schwartz et al., 2010). Familism emphasizes the importance of family cohesion, closeness, loyalty and reciprocity, and the importance of respecting and honoring the family (Behnke, et al., 2008; Corona et al., 2017; Hernández & Bámaca-Colbert, 2016; Schwartz et al., 2010).

There are multiple aspects to familism. Broadly, there are two components: attitudinal familism and behavioral familism. Attitudinal familism is the actual belief and value regarding the importance of family and putting it before the individual (Sabogal et al., 1987; Stein et al., 2014). Behavioral familism is the action that is expressed because of the belief and value of putting the family first (Sabogal et al., 1987; Stein et al., 2014). Of these two dimensions, attitudinal familism is believed to have the biggest familism influence as the beliefs and values that come from attitudinal familism influences behavior and the interpretation of behavior (Stein et al., 2014).

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Protective Factors. Familism has protected individuals and families from a variety of stresses. Corona and colleagues (2017) found that higher familism values decreased stress associated with health concerns such as diabetes, cancer, and HIV. Holding higher familism values were also associated with lower depressive symptoms and fewer risky behaviors in youth (McHale et al., 2009). Within family relationships, higher degrees of familism also correlates with more positive family relationships and family communication (Fuligni et al., 1999). Behnke and colleagues (2008) researched family cohesion in Mexican American families and European American families and found that in Mexican American families, higher values of familism strengthen families in tough situations and helped parents persevere through external stress. Family cohesion is important in Latino/a/x families and, additionally, there is a correlation between familism and Latinx sibling relationships. Killoren and colleagues (2017) found that siblings who experienced positive sibling relationships, with a lot of intimacy and little conflict, held familism values very highly. Siblings taking care of their siblings in the absence of a parent is also noted as a familism behavior (Hafford, 2010).

Risk Factors. While familism has been found to be a protective factor, in certain circumstances it has also been found to complicate mental health (Calzada et al., 2013; Hernández et al., 2010). A study found that Latinos were reluctant to seek professional mental health services not only because of the stigma attached to mental health, but also because they already had family members who they could go to (Villatoro et al., 2014). Hernández and colleagues (2010) also suggested that because of the high value placed on familism, anxiety in families in conflict increase because of the higher threat conflict places on family cohesion. Stresses like acculturation dissonance that immigrant families experience might put family

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members in conflict and in turn challenge the collectivist values of familism (Basáñez et al., 2014; Gil & Vega, 1996; Hernández et al., 2010).

Significance

Most literature on the area of acculturation in immigrant families focuses on the parent-child relationship (Telzer, 2010). Literature shows that this stress and conflict can cause adjustment problems in youth and internalizing and externalizing symptomatic behavior (Schwartz et al., 2013; Schwartz et al., 2015; Smokowski et al., 2008; Smokowski et al., 2014). Yet, less work has looked at what acculturation can do to the sibling relationship, specifically with Latino/a/x siblings.

Sibling relationships can be the longest relationship an individual has (Cicirelli, 1995; McGoldrick & Watson, 2016). Sibling relationships are unique in that these relationships are ascribed, rather than chosen. In addition, siblings have both shared experiences such as growing up in the same home and non-shared experiences such as having different relationships with parents (Cicirelli, 1995; Dunn & Plomin, 1991). Siblings often follow closely behind each other developmentally (McGoldrick & Watson, 2016; Portner & Riggs, 2016), and also spend the most time together in comparison to the time spent with parents and peers (Brody, 1998; Gass et al., 2007; Harper et al., 2016; Updegraff et al., 2016). Most immigrant research revolves around parent-child dyad ignoring the sibling relationship (Pyke, 2005; Smokowski et al., 2008; Telzer, 2010). The current study explored the influence of the acculturation cultural adaptation processes to the U.S. and how this adaptation impacts Latino/a/x sibling relationships.

A study looking at Asian immigrant families found that siblings may also acculturate at different rates (Pyke, 2005). The study found that Asian-American siblings from immigrant families differed in cultural and ethnic identity. The authors found that differences in identity

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resulted in both benefits and drawbacks with individualism and collectivism being at the center of both (Pyke, 2005). Siblings who identify more with ethnic culture performed obligations for the family, while siblings who identified more with mainstream American culture enjoyed their freedom from those responsibilities (Pyke, 2005). On the other hand, it is this exact difference in individualistic and collectivist values that made more mainstream American siblings feel betrayed by their more ethnic identified sibling (Pyke, 2005).

Literature has indicated that acculturation conflicts occur in immigrant families when there are cultural differences between the parent and the child (Berry, 2005; Pyke, 2005; Smokowski et al., 2008). Conflict within the family can have negative implications for mental health (Schwartz et al., 2013; Schwartz et al., 2015; Smokowski et al., 2008; Smokowski et al., 2014). Because of the negative implications and conflicts that can arise in parent-child dyads from acculturation differences, it is important to explore how acculturation can influence other relationships in the family.

Not only is it necessary to explore a relationship that hasn't been thoroughly explored, it's necessary to understand this relationship because of the changes happening in Latino/a/x immigrant families due to the current political climate. Currently, family separation is occurring at higher rates among immigrant families and mixed status families, as well as families composed of document and undocumented people, because of current U.S. immigration enforcement policies (Finno-Velasquez & Dettlaff, 2018; Wells, 2017). Immigration raids have kept undocumented individuals living in fear of deportation and separation (Finno-Velasquez & Dettlaff, 2018). Immigration enforcement is also impacting children who are U.S. citizens and who fear and are concerned their immigrant parents will be deported (Wells, 2017). Consequently, these children are more likely to be unnecessarily put into the child welfare

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system and, if parents are deported, have more difficulty in reuniting with parents (Finno-Velasquez & Dettlaff, 2018). In situations of traumatic parental separation, older children may take on the new family role of caretaking for their younger siblings (Cohen & Mannarino, 2019). Latino/a/x sibling relationships need to be studied for a number of reasons, not only because of the lack of research, but to better understand the relationship, and also because the relationship and the familism engrained in the culture can play a significant role in cases of parental separation.

Rationale for Methodology

This study used dyadic interviews to explore the influence of the acculturation cultural adaptation processes to the U.S. and how this adaptation impacts Latino/a/x sibling relationships. Dyadic interviews examined in depth the complex interactions, collaboration, meaning making and varying perspectives of a shared experience between individuals (Tkachuk et al., 2019). Individual interviews present only one side of a phenomena that is often experienced by more than one individual and the rich dialogue between the dyad gathered from the dyadic interviews provided a deeper understanding about the relationship and provided a fuller account of the experience (Eisikovits & Koren, 2010; Manning & Kunkle, 2015). Siblings who grow up together often experience shared phenomenon and dyadic interviews explored this complex and relational shared phenomenon (Tkachuk et al., 2019).

A descriptive phenomenological qualitative approach was to explore the influence of the acculturation cultural adaptation processes to the U.S. and how this adaptation impacts Latino/a/x sibling relationships. A phenomenological approach describes the lived experience of a group that has experienced a common phenomenon (Creswell & Puth, 2018). The process of adapting to the U.S. culture is a common phenomenon Latino/a/x family members from

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immigrant families experience (Berry, 2003). This study explored how this common phenomenon of acculturation shapes the Latino/a/x sibling relationship. While phenomenology is criticized for the difficulty in finding participants who have experienced the same phenomenon and, therefore, difficulty in producing an understanding that captures every participant's experience, descriptive phenomenology is more concerned with capturing depth than width (Jackson et al., 2018).

Descriptive phenomenology attempts to capture the essence of a phenomenon through the description of the participants' experience (Creswell & Puth, 2018). Descriptive phenomenology is an adaptation from Husserl phenomenology and is best suited for this study for its focus on rich descriptions of the phenomenon and fundamental structure of the experiences as told by participants (Jackson et al., 2018). Additionally, descriptive phenomenology gets to the core of a phenomenon through a rigorous analytical process of the experiences described by participants (Jackson et al., 2018).

Overall, phenomenology looks for a deeper understanding of a particular and common phenomenon experienced by individuals (Creswell & Puth, 2018). The identified phenomenon of interest in this study is acculturation between siblings. The study involved participants who have experienced acculturation and who have siblings who have also experienced acculturation. Typically, in phenomenology, participants are asked two overarching questions: (1) to describe what was experienced in terms of the phenomenon and (2) how their experience has been influenced by certain contexts or situations (Creswell & Puth, 2018). The participants in this study were asked about their cultural adaptations, their relationship with the sibling, and how they perceive culture has shaped their relationship with their sibling. A semi-structured interview guide was developed and was used to gather a deeper understanding.

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Purpose of This Study

The purpose of this study is to explore the influence of the acculturation cultural adaptation processes to the U.S. and how this adaptation impacts Latino/a/x sibling relationships.

The following research questions were explored:

- (1) What is your experience in adapting to U.S. culture?
- (2) What is your relationship with your sibling?
- (3) How has your cultural adaptation shaped your relationship with your sibling?

Theoretical Framework

Acculturation. Individuals who migrate to a different country bring aspects of their native culture with them (American Psychological Association, Presidential Task Force on Immigration, 2012). The values immigrants bring with them from their native country are often different than those of the new country and these differences in cultures often lead to challenges for immigrants (Smokowski et al., 2014). The process and extent for how immigrants adapt to the new culture is known as acculturation (Berry, 1997; Berry, 2003). Older research visualizes acculturation as a unidirectional process meaning that eventually, later generations of immigrants will blend with individuals native to the country (Berry, 1997). When immigrants are received in a new and different country, the culture from that new and different country is the dominant culture, while the culture sent from the immigrant's country of origin becomes the non-dominant culture (Berry, 1997). For the purpose of consistency, receiving and sending culture was used in lieu of dominant and non-dominant culture, respectively.

There are four acculturative paths immigrants can take: *assimilation*, *integration*, *marginalization*, and *separation* (Berry, 1997). On the far extremes of these paths, immigrants can choose to *assimilate* and completely emerge into the receiving culture and lose their sending

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culture or they can *separate* and reject the receiving culture and keep their sending culture in all its entirety (Berry, 1997; Berry, 2003). Immigrants can also choose to not associate with neither sending nor receiving cultures, a path known as *marginalization* (Berry, 1997). Adjusting can be particularly stressful when paths don't accept the values of both the receiving and sending culture (Berry et al., 2006). *Integrating* both cultures is another way to acculturate and is a more multidirectional approach to acculturation (Smokowski et al., 2008). Integrating both cultures yields more positive psychological outcomes in Latino/a/x immigrants, individually and within their family (Smokowski et al., 2008; Smokowski et al., 2014). Engagement in any one of these four paths is contingent upon the extent to which an acculturating group or individual decides to maintain and adhere to their culture and to the extent they decide to participate in the other culture (Berry, 1997). Regardless of which path is taken, adjusting to a new way of living is often times challenging.

Acculturation Conflict. Acculturation conflict refers to the struggle between individuals when negotiating values between two or more different cultures (Smokowski et al., 2008). To develop a better understanding of acculturation conflict there must be an understanding of the influence acculturative stress. Acculturation stress often arises when immigrants are adjusting to living in a new culture (Berry, 2005; Gil & Vega, 1996). Acculturation stress refers to the stress associated with the experience of adjusting to living in a new culture (Berry, 2005; Dennis et al., 2010; Galvan et al., 2015; Gil & Vega, 1996; Lorenzo-Blanco et al., 2016; Smokowski et al., 2008). In immigrant households these multiple stressors along with immigrant generational status, and cultural differences between generations and within family members of the same generation can increase conflict within the family (Dennis et al., 2010; Pyke, 2005). This can lead to acculturation conflict (Basáñez et al., 2014; Gil & Vega, 1996).

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The acculturation discrepancy comes from acculturation conflicts, in which two individuals find it difficult to find a middle ground between culture-of-origin involvement and host culture involvement (Smokowski et al., 2008). Any conflict within family members compromises the family cohesion, and in turn goes against the core of Latino/a/x values, family connectedness (Hernández et al., 2010). Acculturation conflict can be especially hard in emerging adults who seek individuation but also do not want to disrupt the family harmony by doing so (Hernández et al., 2010).

Most acculturation conflicts researched occur between parent and child (Smokowski et al., 2008). A study that looked at how values and behaviors of family obligations affect internalizing symptoms found that Mexican-Americans who embrace those values have better relationships with their mothers in their families (Telzer et al., 2015). A different study with Mexican American adolescents and Mexican origin parents found no association between family conflict and acculturation (Rodriguez et al., 2007). Dennis and colleagues (2010) found that Spanish speaking between children and parents correlated with conflict because the evidence of the Spanish language suggests that parents were less acculturated. Lastly, a study on Mexican-American families found that when familism is high, family conflict is perceived as more threatening which results in increased stress (Hernández et al., 2010). The authors suggested that placing a high value on family is actually very stressful because when there is a dysfunction in the family, the foundation of the Latino/a/x familism is at risk (Hernández et al., 2010).

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

Sibling Relationship

Along with influencing each other's development, siblings are also thought to influence the dynamics within the family, however, more research is still needed to understand the mechanisms behind how siblings influence each other (Brody, 1998; Gass et al., 2007; Harper et al., 2016). While earlier sibling research concerned the influence of birth order, family size, and gender on personality and intelligence, current research within the family systems field has shifted towards a focus on the interpersonal relationship between siblings (Cicirelli, 1995). Most research on sibling relationships center around three dimensions: warmth, conflict and differential parental treatment (Buhrmester & Furman, 1990; Buist et al., 2013; Keeton et al., 2015; Smorti & Ponti, 2018).

Sibling Warmth. Sibling warmth encompasses all positive aspects about the sibling relationship and positive interactions between siblings (Harper et al., 2016; Smorti & Ponti, 2018). This includes factors such as intimacy, support, companionship, and closeness (Buist et al., 2013; Buhrmester & Furman, 1990; Smorti & Ponti, 2018). The literature on siblings suggests that sibling relationships that are warm and positive are associated with positive psychological outcomes (Gass et al., 2007; Harper et al., 2016; Smorti & Ponti, 2018). Positive sibling relationships also help individuals relate to others better by influencing sympathy development and supportive interactions with friends (Harper et al., 2016; Smorti & Ponti, 2018). Additionally, positive relationships with siblings have been reported to buffer against stressful events such as marital conflict, psychologically distressed parents, bullying at school, and natural disasters (Brody, 1998; Gass et al., 2007; Keeton et al., 2015; Smorti & Ponti, 2018).

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A meta-analysis regarding the quality of sibling relationship and psychopathology found an increase in sibling warmth was related to a decrease in internalizing and externalizing behaviors in individuals (Buist et al., 2013). With an attachment theory lens, Buist et al. (2013), suggested that positive attachment in relationships, like sibling relationships, during early developmental stages, can lead to development in positive self-image and a positive view of the world in comparison to insecure attachment between siblings that can lead to anxiety in other social contexts. Warm relationships in siblings allow for greater opportunity for each person in the dyad to learn from each other and therefore cultivating shared values that maintain the positive relationship (Crocetti et al., 2017).

Sibling Conflict. Sibling conflict consists of the negative facets and interactions in the sibling relationship (Harper et al., 2016; Smorti & Ponti, 2018). This includes behaviors such as verbal and physical aggression, fights, and hostility (Buist et al., 2013; Smorti & Ponti, 2018). Individuals who experience sibling conflict are more likely to experience negative mental health outcomes including more externalizing and internalizing behaviors (Buist et al., 2013; Harper et al., 2016; Hoetger et al., 2015). Often times, comparisons and rivalry can lead to conflict (Brody, 1998; Jensen et al., 2015; Sulloway, 2010). Sibling conflict and violence, sometimes referred to as sibling bullying, is oftentimes overlooked because of how common it is for siblings to fight (Hoetger et al., 2015). Sibling bullying, along with other forms of negative sibling dynamics, can have a negative impact on the individual's well-being, leading to an increase in antisocial behaviors, behavioral problems, conduct problems, depression, hyperactivity, and risky behavior (Harper et al., 2016; Hoetger et al., 2015).

Conflict between siblings looks somewhat like peer conflict ranging from verbal disagreements and physical fighting (Smorti & Ponti, 2018). There are power differentials

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between siblings and in times of conflict, siblings could be fighting to establish dominance (Smorti & Ponti, 2018). Sulloway (2010) described the competitive nature in siblings that may influence conflict over shared resources and environment. The way siblings cope with sharing the environment and resource is through differentiation or deidentification (Jensen et al, 2015; Sulloway, 2010). The process of deidentification is a way for siblings to make their own space and name within the family (Sulloway, 2010). While the deidentification process describes how family environment influences the development of an individual, it focuses more on the development of and difference in personality of siblings rather than the interpersonal relationship between them (Sulloway, 2010).

Differential Parental Treatment. Parents, in most families, treat their children differently (Conger and Little, 2010). Differential parental treatment can be experienced explicitly by the parents and implicitly by the children (Buist et al., 2013). For example, parents can more overtly parent each of their children differently due to gender, age, and personality (Buist et al., 2013). Meanwhile, it is also possible for children to perceive differential treatment by comparing varying levels and situations of affection and conflict the parents have with each child (Buist et al., 2013). Social comparison theory suggests that individuals compare themselves to others, particularly similar others, as a form of self-assessment (Festinger, 1954; Siennick, 2013). Siblings, who often share similarities in genetic composition, environment and, generation, perceive differential parental treatment by comparing their parent-child relationships to the parent-child relationship of the other or others (Buist et al., 2013; Siennick, 2013). The difference in parental treatment can be emotionally harmful to the child who perceives to be the least liked (Siennick, 2013).

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Sibling rivalry most often arises from perceived differential parental treatment (Buist et al., 2013). Aside from differential parental treatment leading to potential negative outcomes for children and adolescents, differential parental treatment may also cause strain between the sibling relationship (Buist et al., 2013; Siennick, 2013). Adolescents who perceive differential parental treatment report lower quality of sibling relationships (Siennick, 2013). Internalizing symptoms that arise from siblings comparing themselves to one another include feelings of unfairness, insecurity, and anxiety (Buist et al., 2013).

Limited research is known about Latino/a/x sibling relationships (Parada, 2013), particularly when they invest in the Latino/a/x culture differently. While there is a variety of research on sibling relationships, most of this research is based on Western research subjects (Harper et al., 2016; Pyke, 2005). More dimensions of acculturation differences must be looked at between siblings to understand the ways in which the immigration context affects the relationships of siblings in Latino/a/x immigrant families.

Latino/a/x Sibling Relationships

The importance Latinos place on family suggests that all relationships within the family are important including sibling relationships (Cicirelli, 1995; Hafford, 2010; Rodríguez De Jesús et al., 2019; Updegraff et al., 2005). Research found siblings are the family members that spend the most time together (Harper et al., 2016; Updegraff et al., 2016). For example, Latino/a/x siblings from immigrant families may spend even more time together due to parental work hours that may be outside normal business and school hours (Hafford, 2010). Caretaking by an older sibling child may reflect parental neglect; however in Latino/a/x culture, caring for siblings is a way to help the family and fulfill family obligations (Hafford, 2010; Palacios et al., 2016).

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Studies on siblings have found that older siblings are a source of socialization for their younger siblings and that applies to siblings in Latino/a/x immigrant populations as well (Hafford, 2010; Kibler et al., 2014; Palacios et al., 2016). Kibler and colleagues (2014) studied language use among second-generation Latino/a/x preschoolers and found that children with older siblings are less likely than children without older siblings to speak Spanish in the house. This is due to the older sibling bringing home norms and behaviors learned at school. Older siblings not only function as language and culture brokers for their parents but for their younger siblings as well (Kibler et al., 2014; Palacios et al., 2016).

Positive sibling relationships have been found to be a protective factor against stressful life events like immigration (Gass et al., 2007). It has been found that supportive sibling relationships help buffer against internalizing symptoms that might be brought upon by stressful life events (Buist et al., 2013; Gass et al., 2007). Additionally, siblings who report high sibling support also reported stronger ethnic identity and higher self-esteem (Jones et al., 2018).

In regard to hostility in Latino/a/x sibling relationships, negative relationship related to more depressive symptoms (Killoren et al., 2017). Pyke's (2005) study on Asian siblings reported that differences in cultural identity sometimes lead to ruptured relationships between siblings, with siblings who identified with ethnic culture found to be traitors and side with parents. A study that looked at sibling support and effects of discrimination found when an individual perceived low sibling support, there was a negative correlation between discrimination and ethnic identity and in these situations an increase in depressive symptoms (Jones et al., 2018).

Organization in Latino/a/x families generally revolve around gender (Killoren et al, 2015; Solmeyer et al., 2011). While some studies report that girls in the family have more potential for

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academic success, others report that boys are more encouraged to further their education and results in this area have been inconclusive (Bissell-Havran et al., 2012). A study looking at Latino/a/x families and the gender and sexual socialization within the family of origin found that both sisters and brothers of sisters were aware of the freedom parents gave brothers and the limitations imposed on sisters as a way to protect them (Raffaelli & Ontai, 2004). Other differential treatment between brothers and sisters in the family include females having responsibility for domestic chores such as cleaning, cooking, and caring for younger children (Liu et al., 2018; Raffaelli & Ontai, 2004). Additionally, the socialization of girls to be relationship-oriented suggests sisters to hold strong familism values than brothers (Killoren et al., 2015).

A prior study suggested that a family under stressful circumstances might be more susceptible to differential parental treatment (Bissell-Havran et al., 2012). Differential parental treatment arose from Western, democratic ideals of egalitarianism, however, for some non-Western cultures, egalitarianism is not the norm nor the ideal (McHale et al., 2005). This means that the differential parental treatment dimension found in most Western sibling research may not be generalized to Non-Western cultures (McHale et al., 2005). While Latino/a/x immigrant families face unique challenges, there is still limited research on differential parental treatment in these families and more is encouraged to understand the family system (Bissell-Havran et al., 2012).

Differences in acculturation between parents and children may also lead Latino/a/x immigrant siblings to interact more, using each other as social resources rather than using their parents (Hafford, 2010; Killoren et al., 2015; Price et al., 2017; Updegraff & Umaña-Taylor, 2015). There has been limited research on acculturation conflict among other family members

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besides the parent and child dyad. There is a great need to study the sibling relationship in Latino/a/x immigrant families in order to understand the role acculturation plays in these relationships.

The Balance Between Collectivism and Individualism

Immigrants often have difficulty balancing between their cultural norms and the societal expectations of their host country (Yaman et al., 2010). This is particularly difficult for second-generation individuals who balance collectivist values placed by their immigrant family and the individualistic values placed by society (Schwartz et al., 2015; Yaman et al., 2010). The individualism-collectivism is one of the broadest dimensions that distinguish cultures around the world (Singelis et al., 1995). The values that differentiate the cultures of individualistic and collectivist societies center on their independence or interdependence to their social group (Hamamura, 2012). While individualism and collectivism appear to be dimensional dichotomies, literature has emphasized that both can be valued and experienced in either an individual or a culture and that the incorporation of both can be influenced by the context in which an individual or group is found. (Kapoor et al., 1995; Oyserman & Lee, 2008; Schwartz et al., 2015; Singelis et al., 1995). Acculturation theory explains that phenomenon of integrating both individualistic and collectivist values as *integration*, also known as multiculturalism (Smokowski et al., 2008). According to the acculturation framework, at the extreme ends, immigrant individuals who solely adopt individualistic values are *assimilating* completely to the host culture while immigrants who retain their collectivist values are *separating* from the host culture to keep their sending culture values (Berry, 1997; Berry, 2003). These two dimensions serve to understand the similarities and differences across different cultural groups.

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Individualism. Individualism encourages the importance of the individual. Placing importance on the individual does not mean that groups are ignored, but that when conflict arises between the individual's values and goals and the groups' values and goals, the individual's takes precedence over the group's. Personal achievement is valued as is independence, space from one another, and uniqueness (Kapoor et al., 1995; Oyserman & Lee, 2008). Individualism is distinctly perceived as a "Western cultural phenomenon" (Hamamura, 2012). The United States is an individualistic society and from within the perspectives of collectivist individuals, individualism is an American trait (Hui & Triandis, 1986; Oyserman & Lee, 2008; Schwartz et al., 2013). While the U.S. culture is more individualistic, Latinos are more collectivistic and emphasize family connectedness (Oyserman & Lee, 2008; Schwartz et al., 2013; Singelis et al., 1995).

Collectivism. Collectivist societies place value of the group over the individual (Oyserman & Lee, 2008; Schwartz et al., 2010) In these societies, the social ties and identities of an individual are embedded within the group they belong to and often times the goals of an individual and of a group are similar (Singelis et al., 1995). Individuals take precaution in how their behavior might have an impact on the group knowing that individual success reflect well and individual failures bring shame and guilt (Hui & Triandis, 1986; Kapoor et al., 1995; Singelis et al., 1995). Because of the importance collectivist societies place on relationship and interdependence, individuals aspire to complete duties and obligations for the benefit of the group (Schwartz et al., 2010; Singelis et al., 1995). Along with group harmony, it is important to note that collectivist cultures also endorse a hierarchical structure, particularly in regards to respecting older individuals (Kapoor et al., 1995). Collectivism can be seen as a concern for maintaining peace and structure within the group and challenges may arise when in contact with

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cultures that value individualism (Hui & Triandis, 1986; Yaman et al., 2010). A majority of the immigrant population in the United States holds collectivist values including Latinos and Asian immigrants (Singelis et al., 1995). The collectivism in these cultures is extremely important in immigrant families since they have few sources of support outside of their family in the new country.

U.S. Individualism and Immigrant Collectivism. Often times, immigrants in the U.S. are navigating between the collectivism they were socialized in their native country and the individualism valued in the host country (Yaman et al., 2010). This is not to say that life for immigrants from collectivist societies in the U.S. will be disharmonious, however navigating between the two will be a part of the acculturation process that most other families who are native to the country might not have to experience (Yaman et al., 2010). For example, while most children, from both immigrant and non-immigrant families, have responsibilities such as house chores and homework to accomplish, children from immigrant, collectivist families have additional responsibilities like interpreting for their parents and caring for younger siblings (Fuligni et al., 1999; Ponizovsky et al., 2015; Telzer et al., 2015). While this added responsibility may appear to be an impairment through an individualistic lens, through a collectivist lens it is highly valued because the child is fulfilling duties and obligations for the better of the family (Ponizovsky et al., 2015; Fuligni et al., 1999).

While second-generation immigrants are native to the host country, they still face the challenges of balancing the collectivist values placed at home and the individualistic values placed outside of the home, like school and work (Schwartz et al., 2015; Yaman et al., 2010). While in the new, individualistic country, immigrant families continue to hold collectivist values and practices (Yaman et al., 2010). It's important to note that having spent their entire lives in a

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predominantly individualistic society, second-generation immigrants may identify more with individualistic values and experience positive psychological outcomes from these values as opposed to the collectivist values their parents may uphold (Schwartz et al., 2013). These differences in values often lead to acculturation conflicts within a family.

Current Study

It is known that acculturation conflicts occur intergenerationally and mostly between parent and child (Smokowski et al., 2008; Telzer, 2010). However, research has demonstrated the important role siblings have in immigrant families on navigating a world that parents might not know very well (Hafford, 2010; Kibler et al., 2014; Palacios et al., 2016). While siblings in general serve as sources of socialization, siblings in immigrant families may also serve as sources of survival for a family in a new country (Gass et al., 2007; Hafford, 2010; Kibler et al., 2014; Palacios et al., 2016). The vital role siblings of immigrant families play for each other along with the theory of acculturation and differing acculturation paths and rates makes it important to research the effects of acculturation between siblings on the sibling relationship. The current study explored the influence of the acculturation cultural adaptation processes to the U.S. and how this adaptation may impact Latino/a/x sibling relationships.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

Study Design

The study used dyadic interviewing and descriptive phenomenology to explore the influence of the acculturation cultural adaptation processes to the U.S. and how this adaptation may impact Latino/a/x sibling relationships. While phenomenology aims to capture the essence of a phenomenon experienced by a group of people, descriptive phenomenology additionally aims to get to the core of a phenomenon through careful analysis of the detailed experiences (Creswell & Puth, 2018; Jackson et al., 2018). Descriptive phenomenology was the most appropriate method to use for this exploratory study because of the revealing nature of rich and complex descriptions (Jackson et al., 2018). Descriptive details about what each individual and the sibling dyad experienced and how that experience influenced other contexts or situations allowed for a greater understanding of the phenomenon (Creswell & Puth, 2018). The study aimed to understand Latino/a/x immigrant siblings by exploring the influence of the acculturation cultural adaptation processes to the U.S. and how this adaptation may impact Latino/a/x sibling relationships.

Participants

Sibling dyads were recruited through convenient purposeful sampling in the United States. Most phenomenological studies suggest sampling a heterogenous group of between three to fifteen individuals (Creswell & Puth, 2018). This study recruited eight ($N = 8$) sibling dyads, that is within the suggestion of phenomenological studies, however, descriptive phenomenology is more concerned with collecting rich and detailed descriptions than the number of participants (Jackson et al., 2018). Flyers (Appendix A) about the study were posted in various locations; flyers contained basic information about the purpose of study that aimed to explore sibling

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relationships in Latino/a/x immigrant families. Flyers also contained the researcher's contact information to allow interested individuals to contact the research group for participation or for further questions. Emails (Appendix B) and social media posts (Appendix C) were also posted to recruit a broader range of participants. To be eligible for the study, researchers screened participants using the phone script (Appendix D) and the screening survey (Appendix E). Participants had to be: (1) at least 18 years old; (2) U.S. born Latino/a/x or have immigrated to the U.S. at a young age (arrived to the U.S. before the age of 13); (3) born of Latino/a/x immigrant parents; (4) English speaking; and (5) willing to participate in the interview with at least one other sibling that met the recruitment criteria.

Demographics. A demographic survey was given (Appendix F). Information about the participant's age, gender, ethnicity, citizenship, education, employment and religion was collected (Table 1 and Table 2). The final sample of participants included eight sibling dyads ($N = 8$) totaling 16 individuals; one participant did not report personal demographic information. Five dyads were sister-sister dyads, and three dyads were brother-sister dyads. The 16 participants ranged in age between 20 to 30 years old ($M = 24.79$ and $SD = 3.32$). All were Latino/a/x and ranged ethnically; nine participants were White, and six participants identified as other (i.e., native, mestiza, Hispanic, and Latina). All participants were either first generation (born in the U.S.) or 1.5 generation (born outside the U.S. but immigrated to the U.S. before the age of 13). Participants also reported on their education level; two participants had completed high school or some high school, five participants had completed some college or their associate's, and eight participants held bachelor's degrees or higher. To keep participant's information confidential and to recruit participants as randomly as possible, the survey held no identifiable information. Participants were given ID numbers, which were stored in a secure

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database, and after the screening process the participants were selected by their given ID numbers.

Procedures

Upon receiving Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval (Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board Project No. 19-794), recruitment flyers and email and social media posts were posted and interested participants were able to contact the researchers for further information on participation. Researchers sent out an electronic consent form (Appendix G) to the interested dyads that contained the following: information detailing the aim of the study (i.e., to hear the sibling experiences of adult individuals from Latino/a/x immigrant families), benefits to gain from the study (e.g., further understanding of these sibling relationships in context of culture), possible risks, and that participation was voluntary. The consent form also informed the participants that if recruited, there would be a dyadic interview with both siblings where the participants would be asked questions pertaining to their relationship with their sibling and the influence of culture on their relationship. Each subject in the dyad signed two copies of the consent form to participate; one copy was given back to the researcher and the second copy the subjects kept for their records.

To ensure participants met all requirements for the study, a screening survey was administered over the phone using both the phone script and the screening survey. Twelve individuals expressed interested and after screening for requirements, eight sibling dyads met criteria and were selected for interviews. The default location for where the interview were conducted were via telephone or in person; six interviews were conducted over the phone and two interviews were conducted in person. Although the option of having a phone interviews was offered, the researchers preferred face-to-face interviews as the main source of data collection

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because it allowed the researcher the opportunity to ask open-ended questions and make observations about the participants that would enrich the understanding of the phenomenon. All interviews were done in a confidential space provided by the researchers or recommended by the participants. Interviews were done conjointly. The participants completed the demographic survey at the beginning of the interview. Typically, *what* and *how* questions were asked to get a textual and structural understanding of the common phenomenon (Creswell & Puth, 2018). Interviews were conducted between the researcher and the dyadic participants following an interview protocol (Appendix H) and were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim.

Data collection

Interview Protocol. The interviews were semi-structured and began with the research question: “Coming from an immigrant Latino/a/x family, tell me about your adaptation to the U.S.” It is beneficial to understand how the participants make meaning of their culture(s) and how they identify rather than assume. While the research questions remained “How does the acculturation cultural adaptation processes to the U.S. shape Latino/a/x siblings’ relationships?” we began with broader questions to give the participant more options for the direction of the interview. Each sibling was asked about their sibling relationship and how culture has shaped their sibling relationship. These questions are broad enough that it kept the fluidity of the interview and the sub questions that were asked after each broader question were specific enough that it was able to capture information on those overarching topics. Additionally, an important aspect of dyadic interviews is the dyad’s interaction and engagement with each other (Tkachuk et al., 2019). The participants were reminded of the interactive nature of the interview at the start of the interview and multipartiality was upheld by checking in with the other sibling after the other had spoken and limiting direct questions toward a specific sibling.

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Data Analysis

To modify and capture the dyadic essence, the study used dyadic analysis as described by Tkachuk and colleagues (2019) using the areas of agreeance; where siblings agree about the experience of certain phenomenon; divergence; where siblings disagree about the experience of a certain phenomenon; and uniqueness; experiences unique to one sibling. The first step in the data analysis was to transcribe the interviews and collect all observations taken about the participants. This first step allowed the researcher to become familiar with the data collected and gain a general sense of what was being described by the participants. Due to the dyadic nature of this analysis, this step included holding the perspectives of both interviewees and considering possible areas of agreeance and divergence (Jackson et al., 2018; Tkachuk et al., 2019).

The next step was for the researcher to set aside her own experience with the phenomenon to solely focus on the experiences of the participants. The researcher provided a reflexive statement during the interview process to control for biases: I acknowledge that I am a Latino/a/x individual with Latino/a/x siblings and Latino/a/x immigrant parents. I believe in the importance of this familial dynamic. I am also a clinician working with immigrant populations. I acknowledge the passion that I have for researching and working with the Latino/a/x immigrant community is inspired from my own personal experiences with my Latino/a/x immigrant family.

Next, transcripts were converted into paragraph form and meaning units were determined from the transcriptions. Meaning units are comments made during the interview that hold either cognitive or emotional significance and often occur after a shift in meaning (Giorgi, 2009; Tkachuk et al., 2019). To modify and capture the dyadic essence, the researcher labeled each meaning unit with the name of who spoke it and was partial to both participants and included

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meaning units from both participants (Tkachuk et al., 2019). Shifts in meaning are separated with a forward slash. For example:

No definitely more loyal to me (Isabel). Yeah, definitely (Valeria) / because I would always try to get her get her out of my dad's hair (Valeria). / So I would try everything in my power, (Valeria)/ like unless a parent had to be dragged in, (Valeria) / I would try everything in my power to get her [out of] whatever trouble that she would be in (Valeria). / Like even today like when she when she has an issue, or she has trouble she comes to me (Valeria) / because she knows I typically can help her solve it and we don't involve our parents in (Valeria). / Yeah (Isabel).

Once meaning units were identified, the units were grouped according to similarities in what was being said, within and between the speakers. For example,

- (1) No definitely more loyal to me (Isabel). Yeah, definitely (Valeria) /
- (2) because I would always try to get her get her out of my dad's hair (Valeria). /
- (3) So I would try everything in my power, (Valeria)/ like unless a parent had to be dragged in, (Valeria) / I would try everything in my power to get her [out of] whatever trouble that she would be in (Valeria). /
- (4) Like even today like when she when she has an issue, or she has trouble she comes to me (Valeria) / because she knows I typically can help her solve it and we don't involve our parents in (Valeria). / Yeah (Isabel).

Following the determination of meaning units, the researcher transformed the meaning units and rewrote them as expressions (Jackson et al., 2018). Expressions are adapted from direct quotes from the transcriptions and are third person descriptions of the quote in order to broaden what is being stated (Tkachuk et al., 2019). For example, for the meaning unit, “So I would try

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everything in my power, (Valeria)/ like unless a parent had to be dragged in, (Valeria) / I would try everything in my power to get her [out of] whatever trouble that she would be in (Valeria);” the expression constructed was: Loyalty to sister is described as a way to protect sister.

Horizontalization is a method used to attempt to place equal value on each statement and it is done so by narrowing the described experience down to its essence (Given, 2008). In this study, horizontalization was used to draw out significant meaning units in the data that was used to develop and form expressions. Parallel to the process of grouping similar statements within and between speakers, the grouping of similar meaning units was put under one expression to avoid dominance of one participant over the other and decrease redundancy. For example, after horizontalization, the expression above was grouped under “Protective of sibling,” and grouped with other expressions whose meaning units portray feelings of protectiveness of sister.

Modifications also included identifying areas of agreeance, areas of uniqueness (where one participant experienced a phenomenon the other participant did not) and areas of divergence (Tkachuk et al., 2019). For example, the expression above was categorized as an area of uniqueness because in the quote, one sister is giving an example of how she protects the other and the other sister did not express that she did the same for her sister nor that she did not do the same for her sister.

When deciding whether an experience was an area of agreeance, divergence, or uniqueness, the researchers decided to construct their own parameters for consistency. An experience was considered an area of agreeance if both members agreed and if each member expanded on their experience they agree on. For example, it was common for one member to bring up the importance of family and for the other sibling to say “Yes,” and add on to what their sibling had said. An experience was considered divergent if both members, on similar factors,

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disagree. For example, on the topic of cultural identification, some sibling dyads, who both have the same Latino/a/x immigrant parents and were reared in the U.S., identified differently. It was also not uncommon for one sibling to say, “That’s different from me,” when siblings described how they engaged and navigate cultures. Lastly, an experience was considered unique when the experience was exclusive to one member of the dyad. For example, when sibling dyads reported on their roles as older or younger siblings, specifically because one will never experience what it’s like to be in the other siblings position; older siblings will never have the experience of being a younger sibling and vice-versa. There were many times where one sibling would say “yes,” in response to the report of a unique experience of a sibling and while that could imply agreeance, ultimately the fact that the experience was specific to only one member of the dyad is what determined it’s uniqueness.

The next step was to write structural statements for each interview. Structural statements summarized the expressions found as themes of the experience. To modify and capture the dyadic essence, direct quotations from interviews were used as evidence to support the theme and provide context and complexity for areas of agreeance, divergence, and/or uniqueness (Tkachuk et al., 2019). For example, this structural statement was used to build the theme of sibling positionality: “When discussing their sibling relationship, siblings discussed the roles they had. Valeria, being the oldest, described her role as the responsible one. Both siblings recognized her role as the responsible sibling and stated ‘because I’m the oldest, I definitely am responsible (Valeria). She was the responsible one (Isabel).’ Both sisters expressed and agreed on the differences between them, but they also expressed experiences that were unique to them. Valeria described feeling not only more responsible but a sense of responsibility for and a desire

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to be protective of Isabel. She stated, “I would try everything in my power, unless a parent had to be dragged in, to get her [out of] whatever trouble that she would be in (Valeria).”

The final step of the analysis was to compare and contrast structural statements across all the interviews and form combined final descriptive themes of the phenomenon. The researcher identified any themes that arose across all interviews and identified significant themes that arose in most interviews. To modify and capture the complexity of the dyadic essence, the final analysis included themes in which both participants of the dyad agreed and themes in which both participants have unique experiences (Tkachuk et al., 2019). For example, the expression “Protective of sibling” came across in many interviews and it was actually determined that it was part of the role of being an older sibling.

Trustworthiness and Credibility

To establish trustworthiness and credibility, researchers and participants collaborated with each other to ensure the participant’s lived experiences was captured the way they had experienced it. Member checking was done by returning transcripts to participants and all participants confirmed transcripts. Additionally, a codebook was used to ensure codes, meaning units, and expressions were stored, stable and consistent throughout the coding process. Lastly, I reviewed the data until saturation was accomplished.

CHAPTER IV: RESULTS

This study explored the influence of the acculturation cultural adaptation processes to the U.S. and how this adaptation may impact Latino/a/x sibling relationships. Eight sibling dyads participated in dyadic interviews. Areas of agreeance (i.e., when siblings agreed), divergence (i.e., when siblings disagreed), and uniqueness (i.e., experiences unique to one sibling) were considered when analyzing the data. Three key themes and five sub-themes emerged (Table 3).

Theme One: Cultural Expectations on Sibling Relationships

A common theme that emerged was the influence of family on the sibling relationship. This theme is composed of participant areas of agreeance, both siblings in the dyad agreed and expressed similar beliefs about how culture influenced their sibling relationship. Six dyads expressed (1) the importance of familism and its influences on the sibling relationship, and (2) adhering to parental expectations shaped their sibling closeness, interactions, and relationship perceptions.

Subtheme one: The importance of familism and its influences on the sibling relationship

Sibling dyads described Latino/a/x culture as family oriented. Participants explained how they valued family and included behavioral components such as respecting and helping family members, as well as attitudinal components such as demonstrating care to family members and maintaining a close relationship with family members. Laura and Fernando reported on their cultural value of family.

Laura: In Bolivia, there's a big presence of family and a big value of family relationships and being close and being dependable. That is one of the big core values of our family.

Fernando: We're Bolivian, family is very important for Bolivians.

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Between sibling dyads and across dyads, participants recognized their value of family as a specifically Latino/a/x trait. Alejandra and Elena state,

Alejandra: Some things I feel make me more Latina is family. For me, that's still my Latina trait.

Elena: I completely agree. Like the desire to constantly want to be around family.

Participants expressed perceived cultural differences regarding the value of family. In one dyad, siblings reported on observation made about their Caucasian friends not being “as close to their families as Latinos are.” Sibling dyads expressed that the Latino/a/x value of familism has had an influence on their sibling relationship. One dyad described familism as having “helped fortify” the sibling relationship. A close relationship with siblings has also been described as an expectation and “the way it’s supposed to be” in Latino/a/x culture. Juliana and Paula describe how Latino/a/x culture has influenced their sibling closeness.

Juliana: I feel it's usually instilled in our culture to be so close.

Paula: I would say it’s a bit of culture, like seeing that family is really important.

Juliana: The value of family is definitely a big thing. I think that's what helped us. Being Latino helped our siblings be close because that's what they expect.

This expectation to be close has an influence on how siblings interact with each other and speak about their relationship. Interactions of tension or conflict between siblings were also influenced by this expectation to be close. Participants described responding to problems or arguments as “we fight, we just forget about it,” and “forget and move on.” This cultural expectation extends to an expectation to have and maintain a relationship. When describing their close relationship, one dyad described it as closer than the relationship they have with their brother and even

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expressed the relationship with their brother feels like a relationship based on the fact that he's a family member.

Mariana: With my brother, he and I, we're cool too, but I feel like it's more, I don't want to say forced, but the relationship I have with him is based off because he's my brother.

Lily: I think with my with my brother it's the same thing. He's my brother so, I'll always love him and want him around and stuff but it's not the same....

Subtheme two: Parental expectations for the sibling relationship

When reporting on their sibling relationship, some dyads reported the involvement of parents in their sibling relationship. Participants reported their parents being from Latino/a/x countries (Table 3). Latino/a/x parents explicitly communicated how important it was to have a good or a close relationship between siblings. Alejandra and Elena shared what their mom told them about cultivating their sibling relationship.

Alejandra: My mom always made it very important for us to know that we need to get along and make-up.

Elena: Yeah, she's like, "You guys have each other. You guys are best friends," and made sure that we were always on good terms. Telling us, "You're sisters, you have to have to get along, you're best friends, your only friend, you're best friends the rest of your life."

Siblings expressed how parents, particularly mothers, projected their own desires for the sibling relationship including a desire for them to "not hold grudges," and a desire for them to "always be there for one another." Paula and Juliana expressed how their mom wanted them to maintain their relationship.

Paula: Growing up my mom always told us, if someone has something, to share with the other one.

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Juliana: She made sure that we stayed close.

Theme Two: Sibling Positionality

Another common theme that emerged was the unique experiences of siblings depending on their sibling position. This theme is composed of participant areas of uniqueness. Sibling position was identified as an area of uniqueness rather than an area of divergence because sibling position does not change nor can one position have the opportunity to experience the other. For example, younger siblings will not have the opportunity to be the oldest sibling since that position is already taken and vice-versa. For participants in 5 dyads, the process of acculturation influenced their sibling relationships by reinforcing the sibling position. This means that acculturation has influenced the sibling relationship by reinforcing the differing roles and expectations of older and younger siblings.

Subtheme one: Expectations according to sibling position

When describing their sibling relationship, older siblings expressed experiences due to being the oldest. A lot of the experiences described related to responsibilities of being a child of immigrant parents. These responsibilities included interpreting for parents, translating documents for parents, learning to do tasks that parents typically do, and care taking for younger siblings. Some siblings expressed the responsibilities as “ones they didn’t want or ask for.” Later born siblings often acknowledged the first borns experience. Luis validated Veronica’s experience by expressing the responsibilities she had as simply expectations of her.

Veronica: It's a responsibility that I didn't really want. I kind of wish I didn't have.

Luis: It's expected by the parents because you're older.

Another dyad described the expectation for the oldest sibling to help her parents and how essential it was for her to meet these expectations.

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Paula: She had no other choice but to do it because if not then it wasn't gonna get done.

Juliana: Oh yeah, for sure. I knew that things had to get done and because [my parents] didn't speak the language or didn't understand it, it fell on me to make sure that things got done.

In some circumstances, later born siblings also experienced certain expectations. In three dyads, the oldest sibling was born in the Latino/a/x sending culture and immigrated to the U.S. as toddlers. Later born siblings in immigrant families are more likely than first borns to be born in the host culture. This may also influence uniqueness in their experiences, both for Latino/a/x born siblings and U.S. born siblings. Isabel shared the expectations her parents had of her because she was born in the U.S.

I was born here so it was a little bit different for me. I know for me they definitely wanted me to grow up learning Spanish first instead of English. The language was definitely something that was very important to my parents. Especially me being the one who was born here.

Subtheme two: “A bit more tense”

Older siblings described feeling that their upbringing was “a bit more tense,” especially when comparing it to the perception they had of the upbringing of their younger siblings. Older siblings reflected how overwhelming expectations and responsibilities were for them. Fernando stated,

Because she was the last child, with her, everything was a little bit more calm. With me, was a little bit more tense. I knew what was going on in the household because I would have to translate [for] my parents.

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In one dyad, the oldest sibling became emotional when reflecting on her responsibilities stating, “What *aren't* my responsibilities for the most part?” before breaking down into tears. Luis, a younger sibling, acknowledged the difficulty that older siblings have in the Latino/a/x culture, “There's no diminishing, the first born, I think will always have that expectation whether they want it or not.” In another dyad, a younger sibling commented that her older sister expressed frustration with having to “do it on [her] own,” in regard to figuring out the college application process because of their parents not understanding English. However, Juliana, an older sibling in a different sibling dyad, acknowledged how overwhelming it was to be the oldest sibling and how she was able to develop a sense of resilience.

It feels like to me, when you are the oldest, you have to have a lot more responsibility that you don't personally ask for. It was a lot growing up. But in the long run, it helps you understand and makes you appreciate things and not take things for granted.

Subtheme three: “You’re another parent”

Siblings recognized the older sibling as having to act like another parent. This is in regard to helping to care take for their siblings or guiding them through areas parents are unfamiliar with.

Veronica: Basically like a second mom for some of them.

Luis: Being the first child, being the oldest sibling, especially in a Latino household is basically, you're the second parent.

Sofia, the oldest in this dyad, navigated the college application process on her own and Monica expressed having gone to her for help instead of her parents.

Sofia: I think a part of it is that growing up I spoke English and understood things a lot better. My parents sort of looked to me to help them fill out, for example, my FAFSA.

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Monica: Yeah, I've always gone to her for, like FAFSA or any other questions that I knew my parents couldn't answer, I would always go to her.

In two dyads, younger siblings reported that acting like another parent at times meant older siblings would be part of the decision-making process when parents were considering either consequences or whether to allow the later born siblings to participate in activities. For example, Paula reported,

I would say in high school, I was able to do more things like play soccer or like participate more in school just because Juliana was handling things with my parents. My brother also. We had that privilege of being able to participate in everything just because Juliana would encourage our parents to like, "yeah, you should let them do this like, it'll be good for them, like for school."

Theme Three: Shared Experiences of Growing Up in a Latino/a/x Immigrant Family in the U.S.

The third theme is the sense of a shared experience. This is a theme that is big in meaning as opposed to magnitude. This theme was composed of areas of agreeance because when participants discussed this topic, siblings expressed agreeance in the shared experiences and descriptions included one sibling adding on to what the other sibling had stated. The meaning relates to how their experiences differ from that of their parents and that of their friends and that sibling have a unique understanding of what it was like growing up because they both grew up in the U.S. with a different culture. Of the eight dyads, seven dyads demonstrated understanding of each other's experiences growing up. In some instances, younger siblings experienced some of the immigrant child responsibilities, most older siblings experienced, firsthand by receiving

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some of those responsibilities either after the older sibling had moved out or to help unburden the older sibling.

Juliana: I would say Paula definitely had the same roles as I did, but she didn't get it as quickly and as much. She got it when she was a little older.

Paula: Yeah, I would definitely agree with that. [The] older I got...Juliana would let me know like, "Okay, this is how you do things. If I'm not here, you can do it." And she taught me how to do it and then handed it over and then I just ran with it.

Juliana: Whereas before it was always me, me, me, me, now it's usually Paula.

Paula: Yeah, my specialty now is keeping them organized and getting things done around the house.

Siblings used their shared cultural engagement to strengthen the bond between them. One dyad reported having inside jokes that no one else would understand because they are about their growing up with their immigrant parents and how "it's different with their sibling," because of their bicultural experiences. Another dyad reported speaking English with their sibling to keep information between them around monolingual Spanish speakers.

Fernando: Between us we would speak English...

Laura: When we wanted to keep conversations or information from our parents then we spoke in English to each other not in Spanish.

One dyad acknowledged how their culture and has provided them a unique shared experience that had bonded them.

Elena: The thing is Alejandra and I are so different, but we're also share a commonality and that's our just being raised by the same people.

Alejandra: Yeah, our culture, in that sense did really bond us. Our shared experience.

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Elena: A shared experience definitely bonded us, and we are closer because of that shared experience.

CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION

This qualitative study explored the influence of the acculturation cultural adaptation processes to the U.S. and how this adaptation may impact Latino/a/x sibling relationships. This study used areas of agreeance (i.e., when siblings agreed about the experience of certain phenomenon, areas of divergence (i.e., when siblings disagreed about their experiences), and areas of uniqueness (i.e., experiences unique to one sibling) in order to gain a relational understanding of the acculturation cultural adaptation processes to the U.S. and how this adaptation may impact Latino/a/x sibling relationships. The findings yielded mostly areas of agreeance and uniqueness, with virtually no areas of divergence. Participants expressed their sibling relationship was influenced by (1) parental and cultural expectations for their sibling relationship, (2) unique experiences pertaining to growing up in the U.S. (e.g., sibling positionality), and (3) shared experiences of growing up in the United States.

Some of the findings of this study are congruent with current literature on the importance of family in Latino/a/x culture and the impact of immigrant acculturation processes on familial relationships (Dennis et al., 2010; Pyke, 2005; Sabogal et al., 1987; Smokowski et al., 2008). New information emerged regarding younger siblings noticing the experiences and efforts of the older sibling, and also shared experiences of cultural navigation that creates a sense of togetherness in Latino/a/x sibling relationships. This chapter will report on a summary of the findings and how they relate to existing literature, discuss clinical implications, and explore limitations of the study and direction for future research.

Berry (1997) defines cultural adaptation as integration, assimilation, separation, and marginalization. It was found, however, that participants engaged in another form of adaptation – *alternation*, the process of altering between cultures depending on the social context

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(LaFromboise et al., 1993). While participants self-reported identifying with either American culture (assimilation), Latino/a/x culture (separation), or both (integration) (Table 2), all participants described alternation experiences in which they adapt themselves to better fit within their environment; usually engaging more in Latino/a/x culture with family and engaging more in American culture at work or school. There are mixed findings on the process of alternation and its impact on an individual; findings argue for both the process being associated with cultural identity conflict and lower levels of psychological adaptation and high sense of well-being and higher cognitive functioning in bicultural individuals (Ibrahim & Heuer, 2016; LaFromboise et al., 1993; Ward et al., 2018). While participants described how they alternated between cultures depending on their environment, thoughts and feelings behind this process were not discussed and more research needs to be done to gain a better understanding of the complexities of alternating between cultures.

What is unique is that within the sibling relationship, alternation appeared to be a shared experience. Siblings reported engaging in alternation with each other as well as when they were apart. They reported on the use of English to keep conversations away from parents, the creations of inside jokes about their upbringing, and using Spanish in public around English speakers and how these experiences bonded them. Literature supports the fact that the Latino/a/x immigrant experience is a complex experience that involves a level of stressful cultural adjustments (Berry, 2005; Dennis et al., 2010; Galvan et al., 2015; Gil & Vega, 1996; Lorenzo-Blanco et al., 2016; Smokowski et al., 2008). Participants' reports add on to this literature by indicating that while these experiences are in fact different from White, non-Latino/a/x families in the U.S., the experience is not an isolating experience if there is someone to share that experience with. The findings suggest that, to some extent, even when older and younger

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Latino/a/x siblings have unique experiences, Latino/a/x immigrant siblings have a sense of understanding of each other's experience and a sense of togetherness in that experience.

Additionally, it is important to note that siblings did not report where they learned this behavior. While literature supports that siblings learn from each other (Hafford, 2010; Kibler et al., 2014; Palacios et al., 2016), more research needs to be done to better understand how they may have learned this similar cultural navigation strategy.

Consistent with previous literature on the value of familism in Latino/a/x culture (Behnke, et al., 2008; Corona et al., 2017; Hernández & Bámaca-Colbert, 2016; & Schwartz et al., 2010), participants reported on the importance of familism in their families. Familism embraces family cohesion, closeness, support, family ties, loyalty and reciprocity, and family respect and honor (Corona et al., 2017; Hernández & Bámaca-Colbert, 2016; Schwartz et al., 2010). Killoren et al. (2016), found that familism is not only important to the family as a whole but may also be impactful in different subsystems within the family (i.e., sibling relationships, parent-child relationship). Participants reported that the expectations of familism from their parents cultivated their sibling relationships. While current literature doesn't go into depth with specifics on how familism values are passed down from generation to generation, the current literature indicates that Latino/a/x families transmit familism values and traditions via socialization practices including how parents choose to rear their children (German et al., 2009; Fuligni et al., 1999). These findings support that literature and adds by highlighting parental practices of explicitly and implicitly sending messages to their children as they pass down familism values and the importance of sibling relationships. More work needs to be done around implicit and explicit communication practices about familism and how that may be passed down to siblings.

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Older siblings reported having the burden of translating for their parents and being a cultural broker for their family (German et al., 2009; Kibler et al., 2014; Palacios et al., 2016). While the older sibling having more responsibility in the family is accounted for in immigrant family research (Hafford, 2010; Orellana, 2003; Pyke, 2005; Valenzuela, 1999), findings in this study go further into the perceptions of younger siblings as their older siblings have this role. Younger siblings acknowledged the unwanted responsibility of their older sibling and were able to validate the experience of the oldest sibling. Older siblings felt supported because younger siblings noticed their efforts and that helped them to create a sense of resiliency. More work needs to be done to understand ways that younger siblings may actually support older siblings within parentification roles.

Although it was not as common, younger siblings reported that their parents were worried that they would lose their cultural roots. In some dyads, younger siblings experienced pressure from their family to speak Spanish and engage in Latino/a/x activities. This experience of the younger sibling arose during reports of how their cultural experiences were different from that of their older sibling. Pyke (2005) findings highlight that older siblings are more likely than their younger siblings to be bound to their culture due to the responsibilities of language and culture brokering. Literature also highlights the desire immigrant parents have for their children to be bilingual both for increased job opportunities and cultural maintenance (Garcia, 2020; Lutz, 2008). However, there is little research as to if and how this pressure is influenced by the sibling position. One study that aimed to understand the process of home language negotiation in Latino/a/x families, found Latino/a/x parents sought bilingualism as an ideal and one parent reported having to make more of an effort with her younger children to speak Spanish and not having to think about encouraging her older children to speak it (Lutz, 2008). This study touches

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on the surface of sibling position and parental expectations of cultural maintenance and future research should aim to deepen this phenomenon.

Clinical Implications

Extensive literature about Latino/a/x families discusses the importance of family in the culture (Behnke, et al., 2008; Corona et al., 2017; Hernández & Bámaca-Colbert, 2016; & Schwartz et al., 2010). Findings from this study show that it could be beneficial for clinicians to spend time assessing and exploring the sibling subsystem within Latino/a/x families. We found that it is important for clinicians to understand a client's role in the family given their sibling position, the support that a sibling can give during acculturation processes, as well as the complicated perspectives around parentification in Latino/a/x families.

Clinicians should know that sibling position in Latino/a/x immigrant families influences the sibling's role in the family, specifically for older siblings. Older siblings reported feeling like another parent to their younger siblings and younger siblings agreed with their older siblings about their role. Previous literature has acknowledged older siblings as having to caretake for their younger siblings (Hafford, 2010; Kibler et al., 2014; Palacios et al., 2016) and, in extreme cases, concerns for parentification (Hafford, 2010; Kibler et al., 2014; Palacios et al., 2016). Research has found parentification to correlate with emotional distress, depression, attachment disorders, trauma, and eating disorders (Hooper et al., 2015; Kuperminc et al., 2013). Yet, older siblings in this study reported feeling maternal and paternal admiration toward their younger siblings. This indicates that parentification can be a source of pride for older siblings and is congruent with literature that highlights that sibling caretaking can increase the individuals sense of competency and coping (Hafford, 2010).

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Hafford (2010) also acknowledges that in some families parentification may resemble neglect and suggested careful, culturally appropriate family assessment before assuming any type of parental neglect. Sibling caretaking is a cultural norm and clinicians with little understanding of cultural family practices may be wary of children having these types of responsibilities (Hafford, 2010; Orellana, 2003). It is important for clinicians to be knowledgeable about cross cultural child rearing practices and assess their client family history, mobility, and resource access in order to have a complete understanding for the client's living situation.

Every family member has a part that they play in the family (Smith & Hamon, 2017), participants identified this as their roles. Participants reported that the roles they played in the family shaped their experiences within the family as well as the ways they interacted with their sibling. Clinicians should be prepared to assess the client's role within the family and the ways that these roles may impact them. For example, while gathering biopsychosocial information, a clinician might consider the following questions to further guide their assessment of these roles: (1) How would you define your role in the family? (2) How is your role in the family determined? (3) Who notices your role? (4) What responsibilities do you have? (5) How do you feel about your role? (6) How do family members perceive your role?

In addition, it is important to discuss that sibling position and sibling roles is discussed most often in Bowen's Family Systems Theory. This theory suggests that a sibling's position in the family shapes their role in the family, with older sibling gravitating toward leadership positions and younger siblings in following position (The Bowen Center, 2017; Griffin & Greene, 2016). When using this model, this concept could help clinicians understand the development of the client's role in the family, however, clinicians need to be mindful that Bowenian therapy has some cultural limitations as the development of this theory is embedded in

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individualistic, Western culture (Nichols & Davis, 2017). When working with Latino/a/x immigrant families, clinicians using Bowenian therapy need to consider the influences of familism and acculturation. For example, older siblings in the study reported that they may not have gravitated towards the leadership roles of their family but were placed there because of their ability to speak either speak English or because of cultural expectations of familism.

Siblings also reported a shared cultural adherence and cultural navigation that provided them with a sense of social support. Research shows that the phenomena of cultural adaptation and navigation is not solely an individual experience and its effects extends to familial relationships and processes (Cooper et al., 2020; Lorenzo-Blanco et al., 2016). Our findings supported this notion and siblings reported that navigating their culture and adapting themselves to their environment, was a relational experience. While mental health professionals should be prepared to engage the entire family when discussing cultural navigation, it may be helpful to assess how siblings, specifically, navigate and adhere to culture and how one sibling's navigation and adherence can influence the other's.

Siblings reported that they participated in cultural alternation, which has been documented in other cultures (i.e. code switching, cultural frame switching) (Ward et al., 2018). Clinicians, especially those who do not share the same culture as their client, need to be mindful that siblings may participate in this form of interaction with each other in the therapy room, whereby they may be communicating with each other in cultural ways. While participants reported on their cultural alternation, their cultural alternation was also observed through the ways they interacted with each other in both English and Spanish and through their alternation between both languages within a sentence. Clinicians should be prepared to slow the process down to gain a better understanding of the processes that occur in the room between siblings and

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inquire about the cultural switch that may occur. Pointing out the switch that occurs in the here-and-now could lead to a conversation on the mechanisms and function of alternation between cultures and the mechanisms and function of alternating with each other, in turn, pointing out this dynamic may solidify the relationship between siblings. Clinicians may ask the following questions: (1) How would your siblings speak to their cultural identity and navigation? (2) What similarities or differences, if any, do you notice between your identity and navigation and that of your siblings? (3) How do you feel about the similarities and/or differences you notice? (4) What do you make about the similarities and/or differences you just pointed out? Additionally, clinicians should highlight the similarities their client reports noticing. This study demonstrated that Latino/a/x immigrant siblings can be a source of support for each other and highlighting similarities can shift a potentially lonely experience into a shared experience.

Lastly, findings from this study suggest that alternation may be an additional element to explore when working with Latino/a/x immigrant individuals and siblings. Clinicians, particularly White, non-immigrant clinicians, need to know what that experience is like. Clinicians should reflect what the client expressed regarding their cultural identity and navigation and follow up with, “Are there ever situations where you’re your identity and/or navigation shifts?” The use of metaphors could be beneficial. Participants in this study described their alternation as jumping in different “pools” or, daily shifts that include “nine-to-five and after work.”

Limitations

The study had a couple of limitations. One of the limitations was the sample composition. The current sample includes sister-sister and brother-sister dyads with no brother-brother dyads. This is a limitation because of how gender dynamics may influence a sibling relationship.

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Research has found sister-sister sibling relationship report closer relationship (Killoren et al., 2015) and this majority configuration may have impacted the results and it limits generalizability. Additionally, the sample was composed of adults between the ages of 20 and 30 who retrospectively recalled their experiences from childhood. This is a limitation as retrospective data is liable to recall or misclassification bias.

Another limitation is selection bias given the structure of the interview. Dyadic interviews involve interviewing the dyad together (Tkachuk et al., 2019). It is important to note that this study consisted of dyadic interviews and both siblings willing to participate together in the study. The dyadic interview may have attracted siblings who would not mind participating in a research study together and therefore siblings who have closer relationships with each other. Additionally, an important aspect of dyadic interviews is the dyad's interaction and engagement with each other (Tkachuk et al., 2019). There are times where, because of the nature of group interactions, one person leads and engages more than the other (Tkachuk et al., 2019). While participants were reminded of the interactive nature of the interview at the start of the interview, some siblings were still more engaged than others. Multipartiality was upheld by checking in with the other sibling after the other had spoken and limiting direct questions toward a specific sibling.

Lastly, the varying immigrant generation levels and the lack of an acculturation measure and were a limitation of this study. The sample included first and 1.5 generation immigrants, meaning they arrived to the U.S. at different times. This is a limitation because the acculturation process differs for everyone and factors such as arrival to the U.S. may have an impact on the individual's experience. Additionally, without the use of a valid and reliable acculturation measure, the study can only perceive acculturation engagements with cultural questions that

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participants responded. While there have been studies that have encouraged researching perceived acculturation rather than measured acculturation and studies that have used perceived acculturation, the use of an acculturation measure would have given the study more data and more depth by comparing the measured acculturation data with participant's subjective reports of their cultural identification. Differing arrivals at the U.S. was a limitation because the acculturation process differs for everyone and factors such as arrival to the U.S. may have an impact on the individual's experience.

For Future Study

The study was an exploratory qualitative study on sibling relationships and the study yielded some topics for further exploration. The first topic is to further explore the influence of birth order in Latino/a/x siblings. While there is extensive research of birth order on White siblings, more research can be done for Latino/a/x siblings. Older siblings in this study discussed their responsibilities as being the older sibling and additionally expressed their perception of their younger siblings living a calmer life, in comparison to theirs. Future studies can explore the observations and perceptions older siblings had in regard to their responsibilities and that of their younger siblings. Future studies can also explore the observations and perceptions of younger siblings.

Additionally, future study should research how gender influences Latino/a/x siblings. The findings suggest gender may influence sibling roles and relationships as gender influenced differences in support and differences in responsibilities and chores. Gender should be studied in terms of how it influences cultural adaptation and sibling dynamics. Gender is a cultural intersectionality on its own and it would be interesting to explore how each cultural intersectionality influences the sibling's role and the sibling relationship. In regard to gender,

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future study can look at differences between Latino/a/x sister relationships, Latino/a/x brother relationships, and mixed-gender Latino/a/x sibling relationships.

Lastly, as stated previously, a limitation of this study was the nature of the dyadic interview structure. More participants may have been recruited if interviews had been conducted individually. Not only would it have been possible to recruit more participants for individual interviews, more information may have been collected because of a greater sense of privacy that comes with one-on-one interviews. It is suggested that future studies collect dyadic data using individual interviews, in addition to dyadic interviews, to capture and deepen the data that is collected.

Conclusion

This study helped address gaps in the Latino/a/x literature by exploring the influence of the acculturation cultural adaptation processes to the U.S. and how this adaptation may impact Latino/a/x sibling relationships. Previous studies on Latino/a/x immigrant families focus on parent-child dynamics and previous studies on sibling relationships use predominately Western populations. Additionally, limited literature in this area used monadic approaches, meaning individual data. This study's use of dyadic interviewing and analysis added a dyadic perspective on these findings and the Latino/a/x literature. Findings from this study highlight the importance of family in Latino/a/x culture and how it extends to and is expected in sibling relationships and the unique and shared experiences of Latino/a/x immigrant siblings growing up in the U.S.

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APPENDIX A
Recruitment Flyer

LATINO FAMILY RESEARCH STUDY

Do you have stories about growing up with your sibling(s)?

We are looking for siblings to share their experiences about growing up in a Latino immigrant family!

Requirements include:

- 1) You must be at least 18 years old
- 2) You must be Latinx U.S. born
- 3) Have parents born outside of U.S.
- 4) Speak and understand English
- 5) Have at least one other sibling willing to participate and also meets recruitment criteria



Please contact Christina Almeyda at pca428@vt.edu or (703)565-6244
Virginia Tech NVC
7054 Haycock Rd,
Falls Church, VA 22043

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APPENDIX B Recruitment Email

Good morning everyone!

I am currently recruiting participants for my master's thesis entitled: *Exploring Sibling Relationships in Latino/a/x Immigrant Families* (Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board Project No. 19-794).

The purpose of this study is to research how culture in immigrant Latino/a/x siblings shape their relationship. I am seeking to interview Latino/a/x immigrant sibling dyads. Participants will be asked to complete a 60 - 90 minute interview together. Interview questions will be focused on their culture and their sibling relationship. I would like to learn about if/how they navigate between different cultures and how/if culture shapes their relationship (e.g., American culture/Latinx culture, relationship closeness/differences).

The interview will be held at a time and place convenient to the dyad. Phone interviews are an option in the place of in-person interviews. Each sibling pair will have the option to be entered into a drawing for \$100 in gift cards (in one sibling pair, each sibling in the pair will receive \$50) once all the interviews are completed. Each pair will be allowed one entry for the drawing and will have approximately 1/10 odds.

Dyads may be eligible to participate if:

- (1) They are at least 18 years old
- (2) They are Latino/a/x
- (3) They are U.S. born or must have immigrated to the U.S. at a young age
- (4) They have Latino/a/x immigrant parents
- (5) They speak and understand English
- (6) Both siblings are willing to participate and meet the above criteria

I have attached a recruitment flyer that can be shared with interested participants. If you or anyone you know fits these inclusion criteria and would be interested in participating, please contact me at either pca428@vt.edu or (703)565-6244.

I am conducting this study to satisfy the program requirements for Virginia Tech's M.S. in Marriage and Family Therapy, located in the Human Development and Family Science Department.

Thank you and please feel free to reach out with any questions or concerns.

Best regards,
Christina

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APPENDIX C Recruitment Post on Social Media

Hello everyone!

I am currently recruiting participants for my master's thesis exploring the experiences of siblings from Latino/a/x immigrant families (Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board Project No. 19-794).

The purpose of this study is to research how culture in immigrant Latino/a/x siblings shape their relationship. My hope is that the results of this study will lead to a greater understanding of Latino/a/x siblings and families, identify common experiences within the Latinx immigrant community, and enable mental health professionals to better serve Latino/a/x immigrant communities and families.

Participants will be asked to complete a 60 -90-minute interview together. The interview will be held at a time and place convenient to the sibling pair. Phone interviews are an option in the place of in-person interviews for pairs who cannot meet in person. Each sibling pair will have the option to be entered into a drawing for \$100 in gift cards (in one sibling pair, each sibling in the pair will receive \$50) once all the interviews are completed. Each pair will be allowed one entry for the drawing and will have approximately 1/10 odds.

Interview questions will include a brief demographic questionnaire followed by open-ended questions focused on the sibling pair's experience with culture and their sibling relationship. I am interested in gaining understanding about if/how siblings navigate between different cultures and how/if culture shapes their relationship (e.g., American culture/Latinx culture, relationship closeness/differences).

Sibling pairs may be eligible to participate if:

- (1) They are at least 18 years old
- (2) They are Latino/a/x
- (3) They are U.S. born or must have immigrated to the U.S. at a young age
- (4) They have Latino/a/x immigrant parents
- (5) They speak and understand English
- (6) Both siblings are willing to participate and meet the above criteria

For siblings who choose to participate, every effort will be made to keep the information provided strictly confidential.

If you or anyone you know fits these inclusion criteria and would be interested in participating, please contact me via email (pca428@vt.edu) or phone (703-565-6244).

I truly appreciate your time. Feel free to share this post and please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions or concerns!

Best regards,

Christina Almeyda
Virginia Tech MFT Masters Candidate

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APPENDIX D Phone Script

Hi,

Thank you for your interest in Exploring Sibling Relationships in Latino/a/x Immigrant Families. How much do you know about this study? The purpose of this study is to explore how culture and your relationship with your sibling influence each other. This study is looking to hear your stories about growing up in this country with your sibling. Are you interested in participating in this study? Thank you for your interest. To ensure that you meet eligibility requirements for this study, you must complete a quick screening survey that takes no more than 10 minutes. Do you have time now to answer these screening questions?

[Ask screening questions from Appendix E]

Thank you for your time in completing the screening. You qualify for this study. Can I get your first name, phone number, and email address? I will need to touch base with the sibling you had stated is willing to participate and ask them about their interest and screen them. Once they are screened and qualify, I will reach out to both of you to schedule a date, time and location for the interview.

Thank you for calling.

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APPENDIX E Screening Survey

1. Are you at least 18 years old?
 - Yes
 - No
2. Are you Latino U.S. born?
 - Yes
 - No
3. Are both your parents Latino?
 - Yes
 - No
 - One parent is Latino; the other is not Latino
4. Were either of your parents born in the U.S.?
 - Yes, both were born in the U.S.
 - Yes, one was born in the U.S.
 - No, neither were born in the U.S.
5. Where were your parents born?
 - Parent A: _____
 - Parent B: _____
6. Can you speak and understand English?
 - Yes
 - No
7. Which cultural identity do you identify more with?
 - The Latino culture (L)
 - The American culture (A)
 - Equally both (E)
8. Do you have at least one other sibling that is at least 18 years old?
 - No, I am an only child or my sibling is younger than 18 years old.
 - Yes, I have at least one.
9. Would they be willing to be screened and to participate in this study?
 - Yes
 - No

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APPENDIX F Demographic Survey

1. How old are you? _____
2. Gender:
 - Male
 - Female
 - Other (please specify): _____
 - Prefer not to say
3. Are you Hispanic and/or Latino?
 - Yes
 - No
4. Ethnicity
 - White
 - Black or African American
 - Native
 - Asian
 - Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - Other: _____
5. Are you a U.S. citizen?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Prefer not to say
6. What is the highest level of education you have received?
 - Less than high school diploma
 - High school degree or equivalent
 - Some college
 - Associate's
 - Bachelor's
 - Master's
 - Doctorate
7. Current employment
 - Full-time
 - Part-time
 - Unemployed
 - Student
 - Retired
8. Are you spiritual or religious?
 - Yes. Please specify: _____
 - No
9. Tell us more about your sibling (s)

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| | Gender | | | | Age | Cultural identity: Latino (L), American (A) or Equally both (E) |
|---|--------|---|-------|-------------------|-----|---|
| 1 | M | F | Other | Prefer not to say | | |
| 2 | M | F | Other | Prefer not to say | | |
| 3 | M | F | Other | Prefer not to say | | |
| 4 | M | F | Other | Prefer not to say | | |
| 5 | M | F | Other | Prefer not to say | | |
| 6 | M | F | Other | Prefer not to say | | |
| 7 | M | F | Other | Prefer not to say | | |

APPENDIX G
Informed Consent

VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY
Informed Consent for Participants in Research Projects Involving Human Subjects

Title of Project: Exploring Sibling Relationships in Latinx Immigrant Families

Investigator(s): Christina Almeyda pca428@vt.edu (703)565-6244

Purpose of this Research Project. The purpose of this study is to explore how immigrant Latinx siblings' acculturation shape their relationship.

You meet all qualifications to participate in this study if: (1) You are 18 years of age or older; (2) Are Latinx (3) Are U.S. born or immigrated to the U.S. at a young age; (4) Have Latinx immigrant parents; (5) Can speak and understand English; (6) Have at least one sibling willing to be a part of the study and also meets the recruitment criteria.

Procedures.

1. You and your sibling will be asked to read and sign a consent form and be given a copy for your records.
2. If you and your sibling return the consent form signed, both of you will complete a survey. This survey will contain demographic questions along with questions about yourself and your family. The survey should take no more than 15 minutes to complete.
3. You and your sibling may have the opportunity to describe your experience in more detail on a one-on-one audio recorded interview with the researcher. The interview will last between 60 to 90 minutes.
4. You and your sibling may be asked to collaborate with the researcher's on the findings to ensure the meaning of your experience has been captured. This will take no more than 30 minutes.

Potential Risks. The potential risks and discomforts of this study include the risk of feeling stress associated with talking about yourself, your culture, and your sibling. Talking about your experiences might elicit strong reactions (e.g. anger, sadness, etc.) and may be a stressful experience. It is unlikely that you will experience any more emotional discomfort than in your daily life. However, if you do experience stress enough to want to stop participation, you may withdraw from the study.

Potential Benefits. There is hope that the information you disclose may help researchers and clinicians in the MFT field understand how cultural differences affect the sibling relationship and in turn affect the family. Additionally, we hope that your meaningful experiences will be heard and understood.

Anonymity and Confidentiality. Identifiable information will, at no time, be released to anyone other than those working on the research study. Once screened, you will be assigned an ID number and all data from that point on, including notes and surveys, will be labeled

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with the assigned ID number. There will be a master key, with list of names and their corresponding assigned number and it will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in a locked office. Those who have access to the office are students and faculty of the school and those with access to the filing cabinet will only be those working on the study. In the case of publishing findings, pseudonyms will replace the actual names of the participants.

Freedom to Withdraw. It is important for you to know that you can choose whether or not to participate in the study. Your participation is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences. You are free to not answer or respond to any questions that you are asked. Please note that, at the discretion of the researcher, there may be circumstances in which a participant should not continue as a participant of the study. Your participation or non-participation will not affect the services you receive in you are receiving services from the Center for Family Services here at Virginia Tech.

Questions or Concerns. If you have any questions pertaining to this study, you may contact the research investigator, Christina Almeyda, via email at pca428@vt.edu or via telephone at (703)565-6244.

For questions or concerns regarding your rights as a research participant, please contact the VA Tech IRB via email at irb@vt.edu or via phone at (540)231-3732.

Subject's Consent. I have read the consent form and the conditions of this project I have had all my questions regarding this project answered. I hereby acknowledge the above and give my voluntary consent.

Subject signature

Date

Subject printed name

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APPENDIX H Interview Protocol

This interview protocol will be used as a guide for the interview and will be followed loosely. It is possible that questions will arise as the interview progresses.

Welcome. I would like to begin by reminding you about the purpose of this study. We understand that in immigrant families, there are times and situations when family members experience various cultural values. We would like to hear about your experience with your culture, your siblings and how culture has shaped your relationship with your sibling.

- 1) Tell me about what it was like growing up in the U.S. culture
 - a) What is your culture? How do you identify culturally? How would you describe it to someone who doesn't know about it?
 - b) How is your culture portrayed here in the U.S.?
 - c) How does your family do culture? Are there any traditions, rituals, or beliefs that you as a family hold?
 - d) How do you do culture?
 - e) How involved are you in your culture?
 - f) How do you negotiate between the two?
 - g) Are there things that are difficult for you?
- 2) Tell me about your relationship with your siblings
 - a) How do they do culture?
 - b) How involved are they in the American culture and/or the Latino culture?
 - c) What family roles do you take and what family roles do/does your sibling(s) take?
 - d) What is the relationship like between your sibling and your parents compared to your relationship with your parents?
- 3) How has your cultural adaptation shaped your relationship with your sibling
 - a) If you do, how do you both negotiate between the two (or more) cultures?
 - b) Is there conflict or tension between you and your sibling?
 - i) If so, how does that conflict or tension relate to your culture?

Thank you for your time. We will be contacting you again in a couple months and would appreciate your feedback on our findings.

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Table 1

Participant Demographic Information

| Dyad ID # | Participant | Gender | Age | Hispanic /Latino | Ethnicity | Birthplace | Age upon arrival | Education | Religion/Spirituality | Cultural identification | Sibling configuration in relation to each other |
|------------------|--------------------|---------------|------------|-------------------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| 001 | Valeria | F | 27 | Yes | White | Peru | 1 | Bachelor's | NR | American culture | Older |
| | Isabel | F | 25 | Yes | White | U.S. | N/A | Associate's | Christian | American culture | Younger |
| 002 | Sofia | F | 23 | Yes | White | U.S. | N/A | Master's | NR | American culture | Older |
| | Monica | F | 20 | Yes | White | U.S. | N/A | Some college | NR | Both | Younger |
| 003 | Laura | F | 25 | Yes | White | U.S. | N/A | Master's | NR | Both | Younger |
| | Fernando | M | 28 | Yes | White | Bolivia | 3 | Less than High school | NR | Both | Older |
| 004 | Gabriel | M | 23 | Yes | Native | U.S. | N/A | Some college | Catholic | Latinx culture | Older |
| | Jessica | F | 20 | Yes | Native | U.S. | N/A | High school | Catholic | American culture | Younger |
| 005 | Alejandra | F | 30 | Yes | Other: Mestiza | Bolivia | 2 | Bachelor's | Spiritual | Both | Younger |
| | Elena | F | NR | NR | NR | NR | NR | NR | NR | Both | Older |
| 006 | Veronica | F | 23 | Yes | Other | U.S. | N/A | Bachelor's | Catholic | American culture | Older |
| | Luis | M | 20 | Yes | White | U.S. | N/A | Some college | NR | American culture | Younger |
| 007 | Lily | F | 30 | Yes | Other: Hispanic | U.S. | N/A | Bachelor's | Catholic | Both | Older |
| | Mariana | F | 27 | Yes | Other: Latina | U.S. | N/A | Bachelor's | Catholic | Both | Younger |
| 008 | Juliana | F | NR | Yes | White | U.S. | N/A | Some college | Religious | Latinx culture | Older |
| | Paula | F | 26 | Yes | White | U.S. | N/A | Bachelor's | NR | Both | Younger |

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Table 2

Participant Report on Parental Demographics

| Dyad ID # | Both parents Latinx? | Parent A birthplace | Parent B birthplace |
|------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 001 | Yes | Peru | Peru |
| 002 | Yes | Mexico | Mexico |
| 003 | Yes | Bolivia | Bolivia |
| 004 | Yes | Peru | Peru |
| 005 | Yes | Bolivia | Bolivia |
| 006 | Yes | Peru | El Salvador |
| 007 | Yes | Dominican Republic | El Salvador |
| 008 | Yes | El Salvador | El Salvador |

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Table 3

| Themes and Subthemes | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| Theme | Subtheme | | |
| Cultural Expectations for the Sibling Relationship | <i>This theme includes how the cultural values sets certain expectations for the sibling relationship</i> | The importance of familism and it's influences on the sibling relationship | <i>This sub theme includes the core value of familism in Latino/a/x culture and it's influences on sibling relationships</i> |
| | | Parental expectations for the sibling relationship | <i>This sub theme includes messages received from family members about maintaining sibling relationships</i> |
| Sibling Positionality | <i>This theme includes how acculturation influences the sibling relationship by reinforcing positionality</i> | Expectations according to sibling position | <i>This sub theme includes expectations and responsibilities of participants by their position in the family</i> |
| | | “A bit more tense” | <i>This sub theme includes the feelings of older siblings on their experience and how they perceive the experience of their younger siblings</i> |
| | | “You’re another parent” | <i>This sub theme includes perception that older sibling was another parent</i> |
| Shared Experiences of Growing up in a Latino/a/x Immigrant Family in the U.S. | <i>This theme includes how both siblings experienced this unique activity of growing up in a Latino/a/x immigrant family in the U.S.</i> | | |