The project will qualitatively examine Latinx college students’ concepts of sibling relationships. Specifically, this study focuses on how participants’ cultural background affects their perceptions of sibling roles and responsibilities. To achieve this, a phenomenological research approach was employed, which emphasizes the participants’ lived experiences and their perceptions of sibling relationships.

Participants

Seven Latinx college students ranging from ages 18-21 participated in the study. They were recruited through snowball sampling from a larger database of students at a university in New York. The participants were initially approached in their classes, dorms, or campus events, and were asked to participate in an interview on sibling relationships.

The Role of Family in Latinx College Students’ Developing Identities

The project utilized a qualitative analysis approach, which allowed for in-depth exploration of the participants’ experiences. The data was collected through semi-structured interviews, which were audio-recorded and transcribed. The interviews were conducted in a private setting, and participants were assured of confidentiality and anonymity.

RESULTS

Cultural High Group

- Participants in this cultural subgroup valued the importance of maintaining close relationships with their siblings.
- They described their siblings as integral to their identity and cultural development.
- Participants in this group felt a strong sense of responsibility towards their siblings, often exceeding the traditional sibling roles.

Cultural Low Group

- Participants in this cultural subgroup described a more distanced relationship with their siblings.
- They felt less obligated to maintain close relationships with their siblings, often due to cultural differences.
- Participants in this group were more likely to prioritize personal goals over familial obligations.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Participants

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Focus Group Questions

- What does Latinx culture mean to you?
- How do you feel that you and your siblings are similar?
- How do you feel that you and your siblings are different?
- How do you feel that your parents influence your relationship with your siblings?

Individual Interview Questions

- How do you feel that your siblings affect your relationship with your family?
- How do you feel that your family affects your relationship with your siblings?
- How do you feel that your cultural background affects your relationship with your siblings?

Data Analysis

The methodology for this study was qualitative interpretive phenomenology (Benner, 1994). The approach used the thematic analysis method by Braun and Clarke (2006) to organize, reduce, and make conclusions about the data. The analysis was conducted in multiple stages, including data collection, coding, data analysis, and interpretation.

Data Collection

Data was collected through semi-structured interviews, which were audio-recorded and transcribed. The interviews were conducted in a private setting, and participants were assured of confidentiality and anonymity.

Coding Procedure

Phase 1: Each individual and group (e.g., high, low) interview transcript was coded, and it was decided that we should attempt to capture some of the participant’s voices in the study, thus, initial coding was stopped, and the coding was performed using a thematic in vivo method (Braun, 2013). This was a calculated decision made in order to allow the participants to tell the researchers what their sibling relationships meant to them and how they were perceiving the relationship dynamics.

Phase 2: To avoid the problem of coding the data for the primary data set, the research team developed a coding schema focused on the cultural dimension and the ethnic identity dimension. This coding schema focused on identifying and taking in vivo codes and using data from the primary data set as the starting point.

Phase 3: Following the first cycle of coding, and in the following guidelines for the thematic analysis proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006, pp. 86-89) all the codes were collated into potential “themes,” the researchers refer to this effort in the present study as an analytic, operational, and qualitative process.

Phase 4: The cultural themes (e.g., cultural values and identities) that emerged from the codes included “cultural closeness,” “familial roles,” “expectations and values,” “cultural conversations,” and “cultural practices.” The thematic categories were constructed during group sessions in which a minimum of three participants were present.

Phase 5: The thematic categories were then interpreted and validated against the research question in order to uncover salient themes. The themes that consistently emerged across interviews were then compiled into one dataset. The most prominent of those themes were then able to be visualized in a concept map.

CREDIBILITY MEASURES

In analyzing the cultural high group, we found that familial closeness clearly shaped identity in Latinx individuals. Cultural values passed on by close family members help Latinx adolescents develop a sense of individual cultural identity. Additionally, familial roles, shaped by cultural expectations and values, helped participants maintain a sense of cultural identity. These roles and values interacted with our participants’ engagement with Latinx culture through various traditions and practices.

In analyzing the cultural low group, familial closeness plays a key role in shaping our participants’ identities. Cultural values and expectations, as well as household roles, helped our participants maintain a sense of cultural identity. These roles and values interacted with our participants’ engagement with Latinx culture through various traditions and practices.

DISCUSSION

Our results suggest that Latinx students value familial closeness and cultural belonging. In particular, college students who are more involved in Latinx cultural activities and who feel a stronger attachment to their cultural heritage are more likely to exhibit positive psychological outcomes. College students who are less involved in Latinx cultural activities and who feel a weaker attachment to their cultural heritage are more likely to exhibit negative psychological outcomes.

REFERENCES


CREDIBILITY MEASURES

In analyzing the cultural high group, we found that familial closeness clearly shaped identity in Latinx individuals. Cultural values passed on by close family members help Latinx adolescents develop a sense of individual cultural identity. Additionally, familial roles, shaped by cultural expectations and values, helped participants maintain a sense of cultural identity. These roles and values interacted with our participants’ engagement with Latinx culture through various traditions and practices.

In analyzing the cultural low group, familial closeness plays a key role in shaping our participants’ identities. Cultural values and expectations, as well as household roles, helped our participants maintain a sense of cultural identity. These roles and values interacted with our participants’ engagement with Latinx culture through various traditions and practices.

Our findings revealed potential critical differences for the Marcus Ethnographic Identity Model (MEIM) as a tool for analyzing and understanding cultural identity. The MEIM explores two elements of cultural identity: affiliation, belonging, and commitment to ethnic identity; and ethnic identity searching, or the process of exploring and understanding one’s cultural heritage. The MEIM emphasizes the importance of family in shaping cultural identity, but it also recognizes the influence of peer groups and other social contexts on cultural identity development. Our findings suggest that the MEIM can be adapted to better understand the role of family in shaping cultural identity among Latinx college students.

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