



Latinx and African Immigrant College Students' Concepts of Mental Health and Family

Annabella Vargas¹, Lia Carswell¹, Genevieve Wright¹, Marissa Clarke¹, Alexandra Ayers¹, Ariane Dabideen¹, Brittany L. Bearss², Nicholas P. Palumbo^{1,3}, & Ganie B. DeHart¹

¹State University of New York at Geneseo; ²University of Nebraska; ³University of Rochester

ABSTRACT

This qualitative study will investigate Latinx and African Immigrant college students' concepts of mental health and familial relationships. Thematic analysis aims to reveal themes highlighting similarities and differences regarding their beliefs surrounding mental health and family dynamics. This study intends to provide novel and ideological findings that contribute to the cross-cultural literature on conceptions of mental health and familial relationships during emerging adulthood.

INTRODUCTION

The study intends to examine how Latinx and African Immigrant college students perceive mental health and family dynamics. This study will explore the unique beliefs and perceptions of each culture through qualitative interviews. Specifically, this research project has three main purposes:

1. To better understand the nature of Latinx and African immigrant college students' concepts of mental health and familial relationships during the period of emerging adulthood
2. To analyze and better understand the nuances surrounding emerging adults' discussions of mental health and mental illness
3. To examine and contextualize the nature and relevance of familial relationships of Latinx and African immigrant college students in emerging adulthood and how they may affect Latinx and African immigrant emerging adults' perceptions of their mental health

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Participants

Participants will be recruited via purposive and snowball sampling through school-based organizations on the Geneseo campus and Geneseo students living in the greater Rochester, NY area. Participants will include 20 emerging adult college students who self-identify as Latinx (n=10) or African immigrants (n=10). Eligibility will include; (1) being an enrolled college student between the ages of 18 and 25; (2) self-identifying as Latinx or an African Immigrant; (3) have at least one sibling and for African Immigrant participants (4) being a first or second-generation immigrant. Immigration status will not be screened for due to the sensitive nature of the topic. Length of time in the United States will not be an excluding factor for participants. To widen our participant pool we will also be accepting students who are studying abroad at SUNY Geneseo.

Data Collection and Preparation

Phase #1. At the time of recruitment, participants will be provided with a link to the online demographic survey, which will begin with an informed consent and study personnel contact information. Upon completion and screening for eligibility, participants will be asked if they are willing to answer a questionnaire about their mental health and complete individual interviews about their perceptions of mental health and their experiences of mental illness personally and in their family. At this time, participants will be organized into Low or High identity groups for purposes of analysis.

Phase #2. Consenting participants will be asked to complete an online questionnaire about their perceptions of their own mental health, as well as their family dynamics. Online questionnaires will be distributed via a Google form. Participants will fill out the form using a randomly assigned personal identification number. Responses will be kept confidential on a password-protected server and in a password-protected Google Drive folder.

Phase #3. Within two weeks of the phase two survey completion participants will be invited to an individual in-person interview. Interviews will be conducted in the Developmental Psychology Lab in Bailey Hall room 34. Room 34 is equipped with private rooms for interview sessions. Participants will be consented again and then asked to answer a series of semi-structured questions about themselves, their mental health, and their familial relationships. Each interview is estimated to take forty-five minutes and will be audio/video recorded and transcribed. All interviews will be kept on a password-protected server and in a password-protected Google Drive folder. Participants will be offered a ten-minute break during the interview session if desired, given the sensitive nature of the topic. At the end of the session, participants will be offered compensation in the form of a \$15 check as a token of appreciation for participation in the entire study.

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Individual Interview Questions

- How does your Latinx or African Immigrant identity shape how you view yourself?
- How would you define your relationship with your siblings/family members?
 - Follow-up question: Could you tell me about how your cultural values have impacted your family system?
- How do you share your feelings with your siblings and family members?
 - Follow-up question: How do they share their feelings with you?
 - Follow-up question: What do these discussions look like?
- In what ways do you help/support your family members? How do they help you?
 - Follow-up question: Do you feel that you prioritize your family's needs over your own?
- How have you been raised to manage situations and problems that involve your mental health? What are your family's beliefs about managing stress/grief/tough situations?
 - [in the event of a possible elaboration]: Was there ever a time when you experienced discrimination as a result of your cultural identity? How did you navigate this?
 - Follow-up question: Do you feel that there are beliefs tied to your cultural identity that have influenced your/your family's perceptions of mental health?
- What tools do you use to manage your mental health?
 - Follow-Up Question: Have you ever sought help for managing your mental health? If so, what types of treatment did you consider/pursue?
- Have any of your family members sought help for managing their mental health?
 - [if family member has sought mental health treatment in the past] Follow-up question: What types of treatment did they consider/pursue?
 - Follow-up question: What were their experiences like?
 - [if family member has not sought mental health treatment in the past] Follow-up question: What factors influenced their decision to abstain from seeking treatment?
- [if participant has sought mental health treatment in the past] How would you describe your experiences with mental health treatment?
 - Follow-up question: Have you prioritized/considered bicultural therapy? / How important is bicultural therapy to you?
 - Follow-up question: Does your family know that you've considered treatment? How does your family feel about your decision to seek mental health services?
- [if participant has not sought mental health treatment in the past] What factors influenced your decision (/family member's decision) to abstain from seeking treatment?
 - Follow-up question: Does your family know that you've considered treatment? How does your family feel about your decision to not seek mental health services?

ANALYTIC STRATEGY

Data Analysis

The methodological approach for the present study was qualitative interpretive phenomenology (Benner, 1994) and employed the analytic strategy for thematic analysis posited by Braun and Clarke (2006).

Coding Procedure

Phase 1 : Survey and interview data will be coded for analysis and scored with their respective scales and scoring information. The interview data will be transcribed verbatim and then analyzed via thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This analysis begins with exploratory coding, where the transcripts are coded for broad themes.

Phase 2: Second, the transcripts will undergo focused coding, where a full list of themes have been generated and will be searched for throughout all transcripts. Throughout both stages of coding, salient quotes describing participant experiences will be highlighted for later a research presentations.

Phase 3: Following coding, the themes will be collapsed into thematic categories which will then be used to identify the findings of the study. Every stage of analysis will be done collaboratively to avoid bias in the study findings. After findings have been identified, salient quotes and negative case selection will occur as a form of triangulation

DISCUSSION

- The next steps of this research project would include:
 - continued participant recruitment and participation
 - transcribing interview data
 - coding survey and interview data
 - drawing conclusions from current data
 - creating a visual model to better explain the findings
 - disseminating the findings at future conferences
- We hypothesize that there will be significant similarities among the Latinx and African Immigrant cultural groups and their beliefs surrounding mental health and familial relationships.
 - We anticipate that there will be a positive correlation between these variables.

CREDIBILITY MEASURES

- Triangulation of data sources: The researchers will follow the structure for triangulation of data source, outlined by Patton (1999, p 1195). The purpose is to check for consistency and continuity across the primary data set. The following will serve as sources for triangulation: interview transcripts, results from post coding techniques, researcher notes, and original participant responses.
- Negative case selection: LeCompte and Goetz (1982) described a negative case, "A negative case of a concept or postulate is a case that refutes or disconfirms a construct" (p. 21). During the final stages of the thematic analysis, the researchers will label these cases within the data set and attach them to burgeoning themes.

REFERENCES

1. Benner, P. (1994). The primacy of caring: Stress and coping in health and illness. Menlo Park, CA: Addison-Wesley.
2. Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77-101.
3. LeCompte, M. D., & Goetz, J. P. (1982, March). Sampling and selection issues in educational ethnography. Paper presented at the 66th annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New York.
4. Patton, M. Q. (1999). Enhancing the quality and credibility of qualitative analysis. *Health Services Research*, 34(5 Pt 2), 1189-1208.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Annabella Vargas: av22@geneseo.edu
Ganie DeHart: Pk.Dehart@geneseo.edu