

2017


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Recommended Citation

Araki, Amanda, "Parental Cultural Conflict and Children's Cultural Identity Development" (2017). *Student Research Posters*. 43.

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PARENTAL CULTURAL CONFLICT AND CHILDREN'S CULTURAL IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT



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Introduction

What key influences are there on a child's cultural identity development?

For the bicultural children, incompatible messages from their parents about their different cultures of origin may be detrimental in their identity development..

Previous research on Cultural Identity Development has determined:

- HELPFUL factors:
 - ✧ Closeness of the child-parent relationship
 - ✧ Perceived parental ethnic identities
 - ✧ Exploration of both parents' cultures
 - ✧ Freedom to choose self-identify.
- Potentially HARMFUL factors:
 - ✧ Perception of the parental cultural incompatibility
 - ✧ Marital challenges leading to parenting style that negatively impacts the child.
- No difference in self-esteem levels for biracial and monoracial teenagers.

Hypothesis

Bicultural offspring with culturally incompatible parents will have greater difficulty developing their cultural identity than with culturally compatible parents, and will be more susceptible to identity-confusion or insecurity when exposed to conflicting messages.

Other Gender Identity Development factors to be considered (no specific hypotheses):

- Age of participant
- Travel to parents' country of origin
- Openness of family communication.

Method

Participants: 15 males and 28 females
Origin: 17 different countries, 5 continents, 12 first-generation immigrants

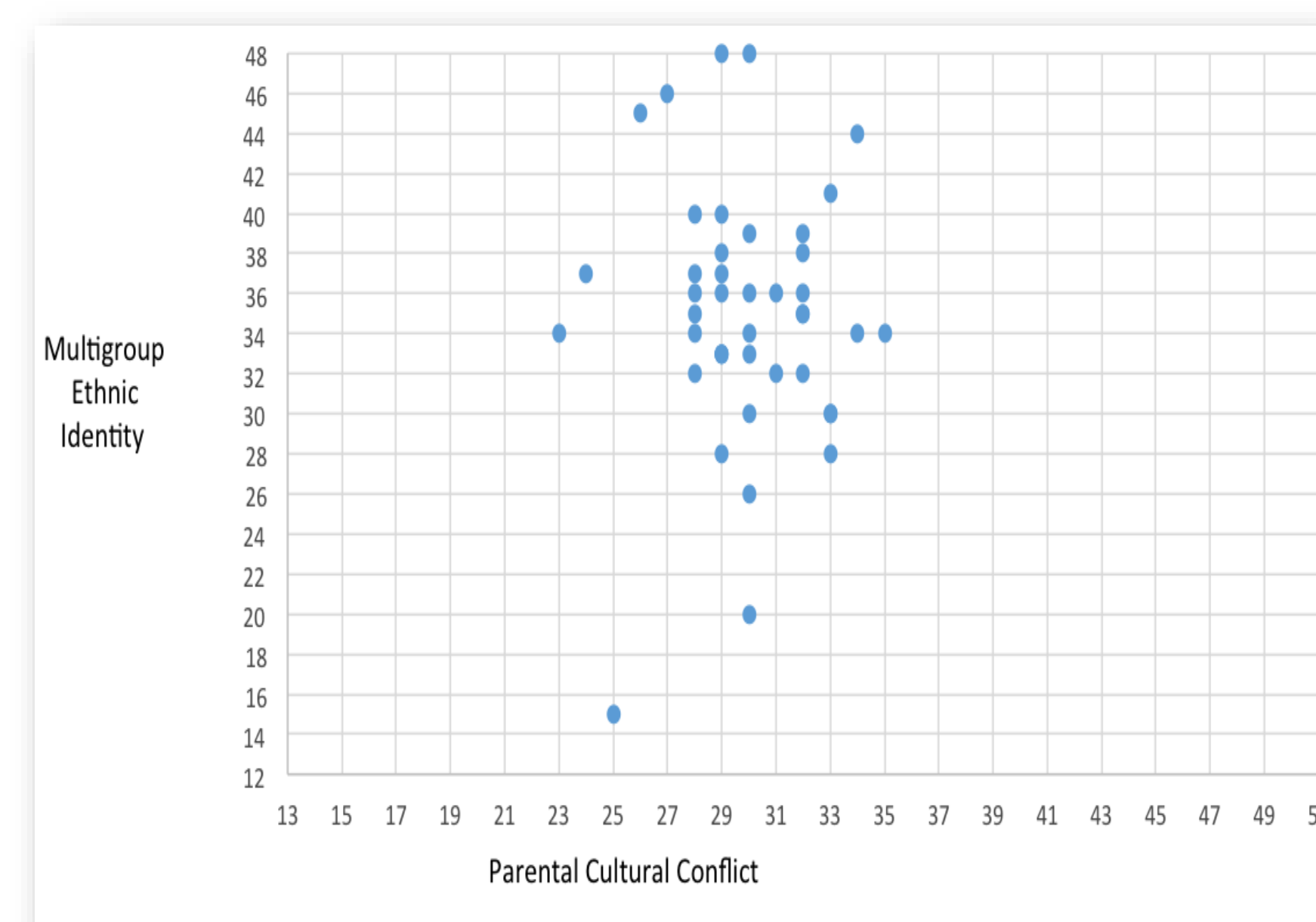
Materials:

- ✧ *Parental Cultural Conflict Scale* (PCCS): measures parents' cultural incompatibility
- ✧ *Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure* (MEIM): levels of ethnic identity development
- ✧ *Personal Information Questionnaire* (PIQ): demographics and family history

Procedure:

- ✧ Survey invitation through Email and Facebook
- ✧ Participants anonymously completed the online survey

Figure 1 - Scattergram: PCCS and MEIM scores



$r = 0.01$ $p = 95\%$

Note: Limited range of PCCS scores

Figure 2 – Comparison of Sample Mean with Population Norms on MEIM Ethnic Identity Scale

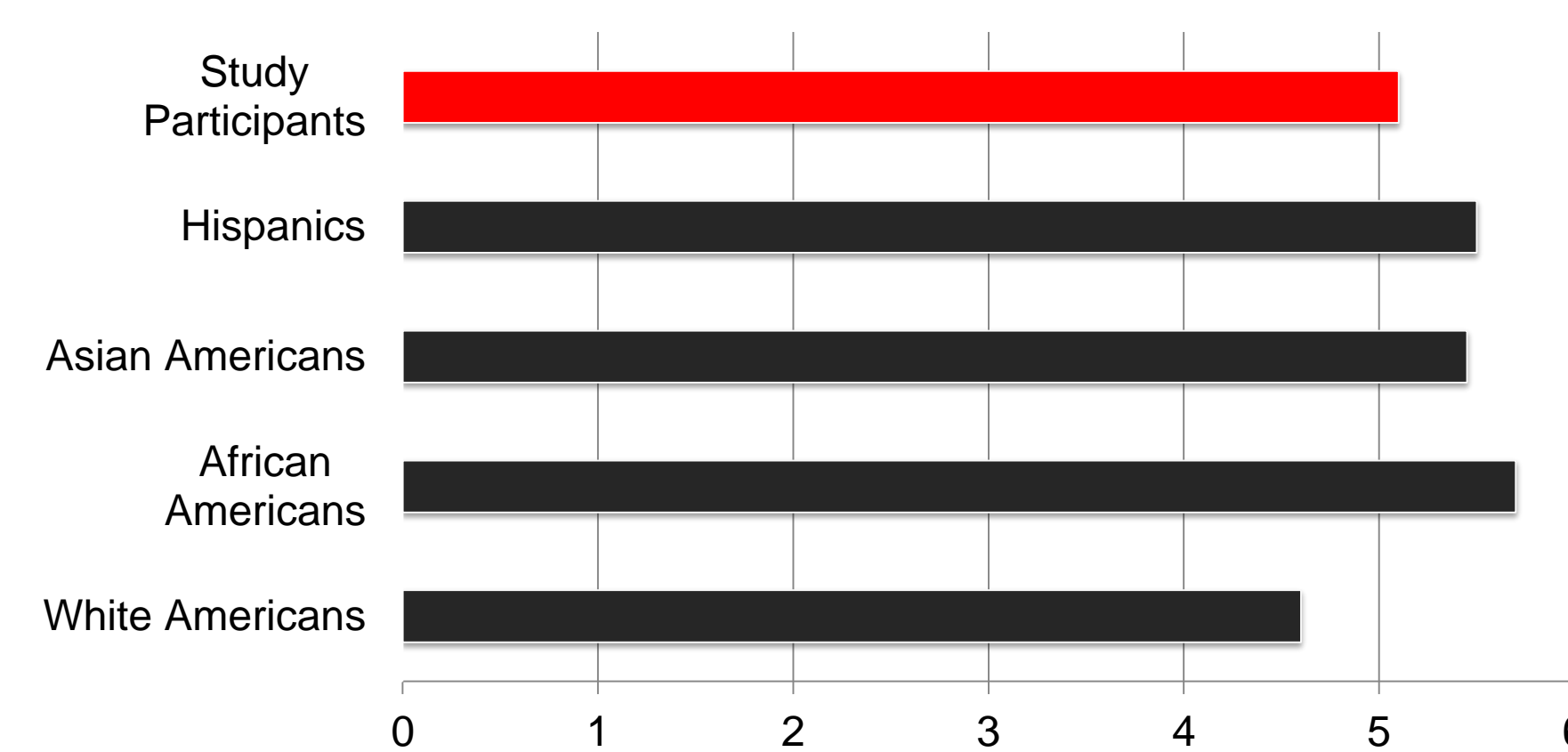


Figure 3 - Group Comparison of Travel/No Travel to Parents' Country of Origin on MEIM & PCCS scores

| | Travelled to Parents' Countries | | t-Test Alpha |
|---|---------------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| | YES Mean (SD) | NO Mean (SD) | |
| Multicultural Ethnic Identity Development | 35.2 (4.7) | 34.5 (11.7) | $p = 70\%$ |
| Parental Cultural Conflict | 30.3 (5.8) | 27.9 (7.3) | $p = 2\%$ |

Results

Hypothesis was not supported.

Virtually **no linear relationship** between the measures (See figure 1).

Notable Findings

- ✧ **50%** of participants viewed the other parent's culture positively.
- ✧ **83%** of participants identified with both parents' cultures.
- ✧ **50%** of participants were not fully immersed in any one culture, but **93%** content to incorporate culture into self-identity.
- ✧ No notable cultural identity development difference between study's bicultural sample and population norms for various mono-cultural groups (See figure 2).

Other Evaluations

Re. Age of Participants

- ✧ **No** relationship between participants' **ages** and cultural identity.
 r (Age x MEIM) = 0.08 $p = 60\%$

Re. Travel to Parents' Country of Origin (See Figure 3)

- ✧ No significant difference on the MEIM for participants who travelled and those who did not travel to parents' country of origin.
- ✧ Parental Cultural Incompatibility was found to be significantly higher for those participants who travelled to country of origin.

Re. Openness of Family Communications

- ✧ **36** (84%) of the participants reported having families with high levels of openness for cultural discussions; nearly all perceived as positive experiences.

Conclusions

- ✧ **Evaluation of Hypothesis is inconclusive**, due to limited range of PCCS. However, the absence of high conflict, patterns of open communication, along with the similarity of MEIM ethnic identity means for bicultural sample and monocultural population norms, are consistent with hypothesis.
- ✧ Limited range of PCCS values suggests that most parents did not discourage the child exploring both cultures.
- ✧ Travel to Home Countries may be a mitigating factor where higher conflict exists.
- ✧ Children may be resilient and work out cultural identities, even when parents make the task more difficult by their inability to resolve cultural differences.