The Relationship of Acculturation Stress and Leisure Satisfaction of Hispanic College Students

Selverio V. Pacleb, M.S.
Department of Learning Technologies
University of North Texas
3940 N. Elm, Suite G150, Denton, TX , 76207
United States of America

John R. Collins, Ph.D.
Department of Kinesiology
Health Promotion and Recreation
University of North Texas
1155 Union Circle, #310769, Denton, TX, 76203-5017
United States of America

Abstract

Hispanics are the fastest growing minority group in the U.S. and signs indicate a similar trend in their college enrollment. Leisure activities are known to have a moderating effect on individuals experiencing stress in their lives. Students who were members of registered Hispanic organizations at a major 4-year metropolitan university were targeted for this study. The hypothesis for this study was there is no relationship between acculturation stress and leisure satisfaction. Results indicated there was no significant relationship between acculturation stress and leisure satisfaction. Examination of the relationships between acculturation stress and leisure satisfaction using the subscales from each instrument indicated a weak relationship between these two measures. One explanation for this lack of a significant relationship between these two measures might be that these college students had already obtained a high level of acculturation, which would explain the relatively low level of acculturation stress reported.

Keywords: acculturation, stress, leisure satisfaction, Hispanics, students

Introduction

Hispanics are the fastest growing minority group in the U.S. (Bernstein, 2003) and signs indicate a similar trend in their college enrollment (Institute of International Education, 2012; U.S. Dept. of Education, 2001). As Hispanics begin to transition into the U.S. culture, this transition is likely to bring about lifestyle challenges, some of which have been negatively identified as acculturation stress. Leisure activities are known to have a moderating effect on individuals experiencing stress in their lives. The focus of this study was to examine the relationship between acculturation stress and leisure satisfaction among Hispanic students attending a southwest university.

The U.S. Census reports have indicated that Hispanics have surpassed blacks as the Nation's largest minority group (Department of Commerce, 2012; Clemetson, 2003). Currently, the Hispanic population in the United States is now approximately 50 million, rising almost 26% between 2001(37 million) and 2012 (Department of Commerce, 2012; Bernstein, 2003). Conversely, the Black or African American population grew at about 11.9%, from 36.2 million to around 41.1 million over the same time period (Department of Commerce, 2012; Bernstein, 2003). These figures confirm the growing multiculturalism that statisticians and many advocacy groups have anticipated for several years.

As the Hispanic population increases in the U.S., so might the stresses experienced by this migrating population. Research has shown that immigrants are likely to experience stress that is particular to their new environment (Hovey, 2000; Misra & Castillo, 2004; Poyrazli, Kavanaugh, Baker & Al-Tamimi, 2004; Poyrazli & Lopez, 2007; Yan & Berliner, 2009; Yeh & Inose, 2003; Zhang & Brunton, 2007). Factors that cause stress have been identified as discrimination, inadequate language skills, lack of social and financial resources, low income or unemployment, feelings of not belonging in the host society, and a sense of anxious disorientation in response to the unfamiliar environment (Hovey, 2000; Misra& Castillo, 2004; Poyrazli, Kavanaugh, Baker & Al-Tamimi, 2004; Poyrazli & Lopez, 2007; Yan & Berliner, 2009; Yeh & Inose, 2003; Zhang & Brunton, 2007). William and Berry (1991) views stress as an individual experience when he or she has to adjust to an unfamiliar culture as acculturation stress. The process of acculturation often involves adjustment to a new culture, learning a new language, leaving family and friends behind in the country of origin, loneliness or lack of support in the new culture, underemployment or unemployment, as well as personal and institutional discrimination (Fuertes & Westbrook, 1996). Unfortunately, according to Smart and Smart (1995a), acculturation stress is a lifelong, pervasive, and intensive demand of the acculturation experience on the individual.

Acculturation stress has been found to affect the wellbeing of Asian Americans (Oh, Koeske & Sales, 2002) Mexican American (Fuertes & Westbrook, 1996), and international college students (Jay, 2000; Smith & Khawaja, 2011;Zhang & Goodson, 2011). Most college students face challenging academic and social conditions in higher education. The process of acculturation and the stress associated with it can intensify the challenges that international students face in college and can potentially affect both their academic and personal development (Fuertes & Westbrook 1996; Misra & Castillo, 2004; Yan & Berliner, 2009).

Finnicum and Zeiger, (1998) noted if stress is the result of either personal or background stresses, there are a number of outdoor recreation activities that can be used as part of a positive coping system to eliminate or reduce the impact of the stressful events. Latin American cultures place high value on group-oriented activities and human interaction (Juniu, 2000). Social interaction is emphasized during leisure time and considered an important recreational activity. Caldwell, Smith, and Weissinger (1992) reported that students with high levels of participation in a variety of leisure activities experienced higher perceived physical, mental, social health, and leisure satisfaction.

Leisure may be thought of as an activity, setting, or experience that is perceived as freely chosen and intrinsically motivating (Mannell & Kleiber, 1997). Satisfaction implies an act or judgment, a comparison of what people have to what they think they deserve, expect, or may reasonably aspire to (Mannell & Kleiber, 1997). Leisure satisfaction seems to result when individuals satisfy corresponding motives through their participation. Misra and McKean (2000) stated leisure satisfaction as the positive feeling of contentment one perceives as a result of meeting personal needs through leisure activities.

Research that addresses both acculturation stress and leisure satisfaction is sparse. Most acculturation studies have involved subjects who had immigrated or were descendants of those who had immigrated to the United States. The majority of the studies cited in this literature review that use the leisure satisfaction concept, involved a variety of subjects and investigated the correlation with different types of stress, yet none addressed acculturation stress in particular. The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between acculturation stress and leisure satisfaction using Hispanic students attending an urban university in the southwest as the target population.

Literature Review

While acculturation is generally understood, several researchers have characterized acculturation as changes that groups and individuals undergo as they begin to assimilate into the host culture, and begin to lose their ancestral cultural traits (Carr & Williams, 1993;Rogler, Cortes &Malgady, 1991; William & Berry, 1991). Berry (1990); Berry (2001); Jay, (2000); Kim, Scott, &Oh (2005); Liebkind (1996); Smith & Khawaja, (2011); Zhang & Goodson, (2011); and Weaver (1993) found that acculturation can negatively affect one's identity, values, behaviors, cognitions, and attitudes. Acculturation stress occurs when an acculturation experience is perceived as negative. Signs and symptoms of acculturation stress include anxiety, depression, and sleep difficulties (Finnicum & Zeiger, 1998), as well as depression and anxiety, a feeling of marginality and alienation, heightened psychosomatic symptoms, and identity confusion (Williams & Berry, 1991). The association between acculturation stress and depression has been further supported by research (Hovey & Magana, 2002; Thoman & Suri, 2004).

The effects of acculturation stress have been associated with fatalistic thinking, depression, and suicidal ideation among Hispanics. Smart and Smart (1991) reported that Mexican Americans view times of stress and misfortune as simply a part of life that fate has decreed. However, Hovey and King (1996) revealed that Hispanic adolescents experiencing high levels of acculturation stress reported experiencing high levels of depressive symptoms and suicidal ideation, which has been linked to an increased risk for suicidal behavior. Miranda and Umhoefer (1998) reported that adult Hispanics who scored more toward the low or high ends of an acculturation measure, showed significantly higher levels of depression and lower abilities to "fit in," when compared to adult Hispanics who scored in the mid-range of the acculturation measure.

Acculturation stress has been found to have a negative effect on the physical as well as the psychological health of Hispanics. Finch, Hummer, Kolody, and Vega (2001) reported that stresses due to language conflict and legal status had a negative effect on the overall health of Mexican American adults. Smart and Smart (1995) concluded that acculturation stress has a pervasive, life-long influence on Hispanics' psychological adjustment, decision-making abilities, occupational functioning, and physical health. The deleterious outcomes of acculturation stress among adult and adolescent Hispanics continues to affect all aspects of their lives regardless of their level of acculturation.

Smart and Smart (1995a) reported several factors that tend to foster and sustain acculturation stress and impede adjustment. First, because of discrimination on the basis of skin color, Hispanics are likely to encounter unfair and prejudice treatment in employment, education, housing, and other human services. Second, because the Hispanic culture emphasizes social and family ties, the pain of separation caused by migration may be especially acute. In addition to feeling lonely and isolated, the individual may feel in conflict with socio-cultural expectations, therefore creating a feeling of guilt or shame. Third, because many Hispanics, particularly Mexican Americans enter illegally, these "undocumented" immigrants do not have full access to jobs, education, economic benefits, and live in constant fear of deportation. Fourth, due to the geographic proximity of Latin American countries to the U.S., the Hispanic culture is continuously reinforced by the flow of new arrivals who bring with them the Spanish language and adherence to the Hispanic culture. Fifth, a legacy of armed conflict and the attendant feelings of loyalty or opposition can separate Cuban Americans and other immigrants from Central Americans. Finally, in the past, immigrants without any English language skills could get jobs because physical labor was necessary; however, today's economic system depends on information technologies and automated systems that require higher levels of education and jobs requiring physical labor are not as plentiful.

Smart and Smart (1993) have listed other negative effects often associated with prolonged acculturation stress: (a) impairment of physical health and recovery from illness and injury, (b) impairment of decision making, (c) impairment of occupational functioning, (d) solidifying role entrapment, and (e) impairment of adaptation to and acceptance of disability. Adapting to a new culture is demanding to those unfamiliar with the dominant culture. One also must master new social customs, a new language, and a complex bureaucratic system. These unrelenting demands inevitably take their toll (Smart & Smart, 1995; Smith & Khawaja, 2011; Zhang & Goodson, 2011). The deleterious outcomes of acculturation stress among adult and adolescent Hispanics continues to affect all aspects of their lives regardless of their level of acculturation.

Several factors have been identified that minimize the injurious effects of acculturation stress experienced by those immigrating into a new culture. Liebkind (1996) found that social context, acculturation attitudes, degree of acculturation, and post-migration acculturation experiences exerted influence on acculturation stress among Vietnamese refugees. The family environment appears to buffer Hispanics from acculturation stress. Cortes (1995) found the belief system of familism that is best described as "feelings of loyalty, reciprocity, and solidarity toward members of the family as well as the notion of the family as an extension of self" protected Puerto Rican family members from acculturation stress. Hovey and King's (1996) study of Latino-American adolescents found the buffering effects of the family support helped to minimize their acculturation stress. Another finding was that positive expectations concerning the future might act as a buffer against acculturation stress (Hovey & King, 1996).

Contrary to the idea that an individual's arrival to a new country before the age of 12 may influence acculturation stress, Hovey and King, (1996) tested the hypothesis that Latino-American adolescents immigrating after the age of 12 would experience greater stress than younger immigrants; however, the results indicated generational status was not found to be a predictor of acculturation stress.

Hovey and King (1996) noted that previous studies explored the relationship of age and generational status to levels of reported acculturation stress in immigrant and later-generation college students. Their findings indicated that first generation immigrants experienced greater acculturation stress than later-generation students, with each succeeding generation experiencing less stress. Perez and Padilla (2000) found that within a few generations, most Hispanic adolescents exhibited a predominant American culture orientation while maintaining traces of their Hispanic cultural orientation.

While studies have documented the increase growth of Hispanics in the U.S., plus the potential for acculturation stress related to immigration, and that participation in recreation activities is related to reduce stress, little is known about the specific relationship between leisure satisfaction and acculturation stress. Beard and Ragheb (1980) defined leisure satisfaction as the positive perceptions or feelings, which an individual forms, elicits, or gains as a result of engaging in leisure activities and choices. Caltabiano (1995) examined the effect of leisure involvement on the health of residents from Cairns, Australia. Of the 340 respondents interviewed, the presence of social leisure was found to buffer the respondents from the deleterious effects of distressful events (Caltabiano, 1995). Another study by Stanton-Rich and Iso-Ahola (1998) indicated that leisure behaviors, which promote either a sense of self-determination or social interaction, buffer the negative effects of stress on health. In a general sense, Gordon and Caltabiano (1996) found that adolescents with a high sense of self-esteem reported more benefits in terms of leisure satisfaction and perceived control over their leisure time.

While a number of studies have linked leisure participation with reduced stress, less is known about leisure satisfaction and stress. A number of variables have been identified that influence leisure satisfaction, such as knowledge of leisure resources and leisure values (Riddick, 1986), self-concept (Fines & Nichols, 1994), plus how different leisure activities affect the leisure experience (Di Bona, 2000). Riddick (1986) revealed that two of the seven variables examined in her study of leisure satisfaction emerged as having a significant positive effect on leisure satisfaction; that is, knowledge of leisure resources had the most influence, followed by leisure values. Fines and Nichols (1994) reported adolescents experienced enhanced feelings of self-worth and confidence following participation in a kayak program. Interestingly, Di Bona (2000) concluded there was no difference in the needs satisfied by leisure for different groups, but leisure satisfaction did differ according to the leisure activity.

Researchers have examined such aspects as age, group differences, urban-rural differences, and the influence of the amount and types of leisure activities on leisure satisfaction. Riddick (1986) found that the lowest mean score on leisure satisfaction occurred in the 50 year-old group, while members in the 22 year-old group registered the highest leisure satisfaction score. Gordon and Caltabiano (1996) found the majority of adolescents were satisfied with their leisure-time use, with more males than females reporting satisfaction. Another finding suggested that the more leisure opportunities and facilities available (urban setting), the more the individual expects and relies on these opportunities and facilities for ongoing leisure satisfaction. Griffin and McKenna (1998) reported that among their sample, some of the socio-demographic factors considered in the study were found to influence the amount and variety of leisure involvement, but none were associated with leisure satisfaction.

Ragheb and McKinney (1993) examined how leisure or campus recreation contributes to the reduction of students' perceived academic stress by sampling 343 students from two universities and one community college. Most of the students reported a high degree of stress in their attempt to balance the demands of academic life. The authors found that the more students participated in recreation activities, the less they perceived experiencing academic stress, plus the greater their leisure satisfaction, the lower their perceived academic stress.

Another study of undergraduate college students examined the interrelationship of students' academic stress with anxiety, time management, and leisure satisfaction (Misra & McKean, 2000). These researchers found that physiological benefits from leisure activities significantly reduced academic stress and reactions to stressors among college students. They also found that an aesthetic environment and relaxation reduced academic stress and educational benefits lessened physiological reactions to stress. Leisure satisfaction was reported to have a weak correlation with academic stress, validating the findings reported by Ragheb and McKinney (1993).

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationships among acculturation stress, acculturation levels, leisure satisfaction, and general levels of perceived stress using Hispanic college students attending an urban, southwest university as the target population. Furthermore, this study examined differences based on gender and other socio-demographic measures.

Method

Because the population for this study involved Hispanic, college students, seven Hispanic organizations registered with a major 4-year metropolitan university in the southwest was targeted, and a convenience sample used to draw subjects. Five of the seven Hispanic organizations granted approval to administer a survey questionnaire during their organization's meeting. Subjects were required to meet the following four criteria before completing the questionnaire: (1) the subject must be currently registered as a student, (2) self-identified as Hispanic, (3) willing to participate in the research, and (4) personally give informed consent to participate. Subjects were first briefed about the purpose of the study and explained their rights to confidentiality; plus the benefits, risks, and rights to withdraw without penalty. Data was collected using a self-administered, anonymous questionnaire. All questionnaires were administered in English. The 118-item questionnaire consisted of five parts, which included an acculturation stress scale, the Leisure Satisfaction Measure, an acculturation level measure, a single measure of general stress level, and demographics. The questionnaires were administered during each of the organizations meetings, which produced 91 respondents. The Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the university approved the survey instrument for use on human subjects.

Acculturation stress was measured using the SAFE scale (Mena, Padilla & Maldonado, 1987). This scale consists of 24 items that measure acculturation stress across the four dimensions of social, attitudinal, familial, and environmental contexts, which addresses perceived discrimination (majority group stereotypes) toward migrant populations. Respondents rated each item on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 = not stressful; 2 = somewhat stressful; 3 = stressful; 4 = very stressful; to 5 = extremely stressful. The possible scores ranged from 24 to 120.

Mena, Padilla, and Maldonado (1987), reported the SAFE acculturation stress scale had a high reliability for these students, with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .89. In a study by Fuertes and Westbrook (1996), the reliability of the SAFE acculturation stress scale produced a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .89. Hovey (2002) reported a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .90 in his study of psychosocial predictors of acculturative stress in Mexican immigrants. According to Fuertes and Westbrook (1996) the Cronbach's alpha for each of the dimensions were: social (.71), attitudinal (.73), familial (.70), and environmental (.88).

This study produced a Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the entire 24-item instrument of .90. For this investigation of Hispanic college students, each of the four dimensions resulted in the following Cronbach's alpha coefficients: social (.57), attitudinal (.91), familial (.84), and environmental (.84). The SAFE acculturation stress scale was subjected to a confirmatory factor analysis using SPSS with a Promax, Kaiser Normalization rotation. The rotated solution revealed the presence of the existing four dimensions of the acculturation stress scale with a weak representation on the social dimension, which had only three of the five items loaded.

The Leisure Satisfaction Measure (LSM) is an instrument used to measure the "extent to which individuals perceive that certain personal needs are met or satisfied through leisure activities" (Beard & Ragheb, 1980, p.22). The short form of the 24 item instrument contains six subscales that measure the overall satisfaction an individual generally feels with leisure. The Psychological subscale (4 items) reflects the sense of freedom, enjoyment, involvement, and intellectual challenge experienced during leisure. The Educational subscale (4 items) measures the degree of intellectual stimulation and learning about self and surroundings. The Social subscale (4 items) reflects rewarding personal relationship with other people. The Relaxational subscale (4 items) measures relief form stress. The Physiological subscale (4 items) measures the degree to which leisure develops physical fitness and overall physical well-being. The Aesthetic subscale (4 items) reflects the degree to which individuals find their leisure setting to be pleasing, interesting, and beautiful (Beard &Ragheb, 1980). The 5-point, Likert-type responses are: 1 = almost never true, 2 = seldom true, 3 = sometimes true, 4 = often true, and 5 = almost always true. The potential scores for this measure ranged from 24 to 120, with a higher score indicating greater leisure satisfaction.

The shorter form of the LSM was chosen due to time constraints and was reported to have sound reliability (Beard and Ragheb, 1980). This study produced a Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the entire 24-item instrument of .94. An analysis of the six dimensions resulted in the following Cronbach's alpha coefficients: psychological (.91), educational (.90), social (.88), relaxational (.91), physiological (.94), and aesthetic (.78). The 24-item LSM scale was subjected to a confirmatory factor analysis using SPSS with a Promax, Kaiser Normalization rotation. The rotated solution confirmed the identical six subscales of the leisure satisfaction scale.

The acculturation scale (Marin, Sabogal, Marin, Otero-Sabogal & Perez-Stable, 1987) exhibited good psychometric characteristics. The scale consists of four items, which were rated on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 = Only Spanish; 2 = Spanish better than English; 3 = Both equally; 4 = English better than Spanish; 5 = Only English. The respondents' scores across the four items ranged from 4 to 20 where the higher scores indicated high levels of acculturation while lower scores indicated low acculturation.

Demographic information for each participant included: gender, age, student enrollment status, ethnic origin, marital status, generational status, working status, and leisure activities. Other major variables used in this study were: (1) the level of the respondent's perception of acculturation, (2) the respondent's perception of acculturation stress, (3) the respondent's perception of leisure satisfaction, and (4) in general, the respondents current level of perceived stress.

The data was analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software. Psychometric analysis included reliability testing and confirmatory factor analysis; socio-demographic profile included the reporting of means, standard deviations, and frequencies; while hypothesis testing involved the use of t-tests, ANOVA with post hoc procedures, and correlations. A p-value of .05 was set to determine all significance levels of testing.

Results

Of the ninety-one Hispanic college students who completed the survey questionnaire, 11% (n=10) were freshman, 31% (n=28) sophomores, 22% (n=20) juniors, 34% (n=31) seniors, and 2% (n=2) graduate students. The majority (56% or n=51) of the respondents were female students. The average age of the respondents was 21 (SD=2.66), and ranged from 18 to 32 years. The majority (83.5%, n=76) of the respondents reported their family heritage as Mexican. Additionally, 13% indicated their family heritage was from Central America, South American, Puerto Rico, or Spain. Most (67%, n=61) of the respondents reported they were born in the U.S. to either one foreign–born parent or both parents being from the U.S.

As a whole, the respondents' average score on the SAFE acculturation stress scale was 47.52 (SD=15.03) out of a range of 24 to 120, with lower scores indicating less acculturation stress. Overall, the respondents' average score on the leisure satisfaction scale was 92.74 (SD=15.17) out of a range of 24 to 120, with higher scores indicating greater leisure satisfaction. On average, respondents indicated their general level of stress was between moderate to somewhat severe (M=3.24, SD=0.94) on a scale of 1 to 5, with higher scores indicating greater stress.

In terms of hypothesis testing, no significant correlation was found between the acculturation stress scale and the leisure satisfaction measure (r=.002, n=85, p<.988); consequently, the null hypothesis was not rejected. The relationships between the 4 subscales of the acculturation stress scale and 6 subscale of the leisure satisfaction scale were investigated using the Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient. The 4 subscales within the SAFE acculturation stress instrument had significant, positive correlations with each other (p≤.03), with correlation coefficients ranging from r=.23 to r=.48. As expected, the 6 subscales within the leisure satisfaction measure were all found to be significant with each other at the p≤.002 level, with positive correlation coefficients ranging from r=.30 to r=.70.

When comparing the subscales between acculturation stress and leisure satisfaction, there was a significant positive correlation between the attitudinal subscale of the acculturation stress scale with the physiological subscale of the leisure satisfaction scale (r=.212, n=90, p=.045); thus, the null hypothesis was rejected for the alternative. There was also a significant, positive correlation between the attitudinal subscale from the acculturation stress scale with the aesthetic subscale of the leisure satisfaction scale (r=.217, n=90, p=.040); thus, the null hypothesis was rejected for the alternative. Additionally, there was a significant, negative correlation between the social subscale of the acculturation stress scale and social subscale of the leisure satisfaction scale (r= -.243, n=88, p=.022); thus, the null hypothesis was rejected for the alternative. Results showed there was a significant, positive correlation between acculturation stress and general level of stress (r=.391, n=76, p<.001), while there was no significant correlation found between the leisure satisfaction measure and general level of stress (r= -.132, n=77 p=.253).

It was also desired to examine both the acculturation stress score and the leisure satisfaction score across various categorical variables using a t-test to determine if any sub-group means were significantly different than one another.

In terms of gender differences, no significant difference between mean scores (males=49.08 and females=46.31) was found for both the acculturation stress total scores (t=.852, df=85, p=.397) and for the mean scores (males=95.50 and females=90.69) leisure satisfaction total scores (t=1.49, df=87, p=.140). However, when examining the acculturation stress subscales and the leisure satisfaction subscales, two significant gender differences were found. For the acculturation stress social subscale, males were shown to have a significantly higher (t=2.167, df=64.009, p=.034) mean score (6.42) than females (5.33). Also, the leisure satisfaction physiological subscale showed a significantly (t=2.253, df=89, p=.027) higher mean score for males (14.65) than females (12.55).

Of the respondents who reported being born outside of the U.S. with one parent who was foreign born, these subjects experienced a more stressful acculturation process (m= 52.57, sd = 16.50) than those who were born in the U.S. (m=44.86, sd=13.61). The difference between the two means is statistically significant at the .05 level (t=2.33, df=85). Respondents who indicated being born outside of the U.S. with one parent also being foreign born, reported a significantly lower (t=-6.59, df=89, p=.05) mean on level of acculturation (m=11.47, sd=3.22) than respondents who reported being born in the U.S. (m=15.89, sd=2.90). Respondents who indicated their parents were American born, reported a significantly higher (t=5.99, df=86, p=.05) mean on level of acculturation (m=17.23, sd=3.17) than respondents who did not have parents who were American born (m=13.02, sd=3.10). The mean for respondents who felt like a part of the student body experienced a somewhat lower level of acculturation stress (m=44.74, sd=12.47) was significantly lower level (t=-2.35, df=35.12. p=.05) than the mean for those who did not feel like a part of the student body (m=54.04, sd=18.46). Of the respondents who felt as a minority at a university experienced a somewhat greater level of acculturation stress (m=50.16, sd=15.69) than those who did not feel as a minority at an university (m=40.96, sd=11.03). The difference between the two mean is statistically significant at the .05 level (t=2.67, df =85).

A one-way ANOVA was used to compare the total score for acculturation stress against the three levels of perceived general stress. A significant overall difference was found among respondents perceived general level of stress (F(2,73) = 3.72, p < .05). Scheffe's post-hoc analysis revealed that respondents who perceived their level of general stress as mild scored lower (m=39.92, sd =12.93) that respondents who perceived their stress level as severe (m= 53.36, sd=16.37). Respondents who reported their level of general stress as moderate (m=47.29, sd=14.42) were not significantly different from either of the other two groups.

Discussion

The primary purpose of this study was to examine the relationships between the concepts of acculturation stress and leisure satisfaction of Hispanic college students. While the general trend indicated that Hispanic, college students showed a low level of acculturation stress and a relatively high level of leisure satisfaction, it appears no significant relationship was detected between these two measures. This implies that a change in one's level of acculturation stress would not have any effect on one's level of leisure satisfaction or vise-a-versa. One possible explanation for this lack of a significant relationship between acculturation stress and leisure satisfaction might be due to the Hispanic college students' overall level of acculturation. A relatively high level of acculturation might indicate that students were highly acculturated and most likely not experiencing a significant amount of acculturation stress. This explanation might further be supported by the fact the students reported a moderate level of general stress, which possibly indicates other types of stress are having a greater impact on the students other than acculturation stress. The suggestion that acculturation level reduces acculturation stress supports the findings by Liebkind (1996) who reported the degree of acculturation, among other variables, minimized the injurious effects of acculturation stress. However, if level of acculturation does impact acculturation stress, this finding is counter to the results reported by Smart and Smart (1995) who reported acculturation stress affects one's life regardless of acculturation level.

Examination of the relationship between acculturation stress and leisure satisfaction using the subscales from each instrument also indicated a weak relationship between these two measures. Only three out of 24 possible subscale correlations were shown to be significant among the four acculturation stress subscales: social, attitudinal, familial, environmental, and the six leisure satisfaction subscales: psychological, educational, social, relaxational, physiological, and aesthetic. This lack of a significant relationship between the various subscale constructs further substantiates the independent nature between the two instruments.

In fact, the leisure construct did not show any significant relationship to acculturation stress or general level of stress. This lack of a significant relationship with other measures might imply that satisfaction in one's leisure is an independent phenomenon from either acculturation stress or general stress for Hispanic college students. This study's results are opposite the results reported by Ragheb and McKinney (1993) and Misra and McKean (2000) that showed a signification correlation between leisure satisfaction and various types of stress.

Examination of the differences between male and female Hispanic college students did not produce any significant results on the acculturation stress scale, leisure satisfaction measure, nor general level of stress. It was only when the subscales for the acculturation stress instrument and the leisure satisfaction instrument were examined that a significant gender difference was found. Significant gender differences were reported on 2 of the 10 subscales examined, with the Hispanic males showing significantly higher levels of acculturation stress related to the social subscale than Hispanic females. However, Hispanic males reported significantly higher leisure satisfaction levels related to physiological factors, supports the findings reported by Misra and McKean (2000) who reported the physiological benefits from leisure engagements. While male and female college students appeared to be similar in terms of their attitudinal, familial, and environmental factors related to acculturation stress, they did show a significant difference in the social factor. One explanation might be that male Hispanic college students have less social skills than females. For example, it is not unusual for the Hispanic male to have a dominant personality; whereby, this dominant perspective can often create conflict when exercised in a different cultural, which could be interpreted as acculturation stress. Another explanation might be that female Hispanic college students possess greater or more coping skills. If the Hispanic female has a more compromising attitude, then she might be less likely to experience stress in a social situation. Of the six leisure satisfaction subscales, males showed a significantly higher score on the physiological factor. This finding is probably based on the fact that males tend to select more physical leisure pursuits.

Overall, the leisure satisfaction measure appears to have very little association with Hispanic college students' acculturation stress or general level of stress. For this study, the leisure satisfaction measure was shown to be independent of the acculturation stress concept. Furthermore, male and female Hispanic college students appeared to reflect little differences across the primary measures used for this investigation.

Future studies that investigate one's level of acculturation might need to consider a sample population that will produce greater variability for this measure. In addition, drawing a sample of Hispanic college students from recognized Hispanic organizations might have biased the sample since these students were already acculturated into the organization, which might have served to mask any acculturation stress. Thus a more random sample of Hispanic college students would provide greater external validity. In addition to acculturation stress, it is recommended that studies involving Hispanic college students consider other types of stress that may effect this population, such as: academic stress, economic status, time management, and relational situations.

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