

## **Examining Ethnic Differences in Parenting Styles in Latino and Caucasian Populations**

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Latino parenting styles have often been described as more strict and authoritarian than both Caucasian and African-American parents (Zayas, 1992; Fontes, 2002). Latinos value closeness, dependence, obedience, and family loyalty; characteristics contrasting those of dominant Anglo-American culture valuing autonomy and independence (Falicov, 1998). Within Latino communities, parental strictness which has been described as a combination of parental warmth and hostile control, serves to facilitate family harmony and supports the value of familism held within Latino culture (Hill, Bush, & Roosa, 2003).

In this study, we ask whether authoritarian parenting and discipline styles, found to be more normative in the Latino culture, are less likely to be associated with high levels of parenting stress in Latino parents than in Caucasian parents. The purpose of this study is to explore the effect of cultural norms on the link between parenting styles and parenting stress. The study sample consisted of 410 Caucasian and 152 Latino parent-child English speaking dyads. Undergraduate and Graduate level researchers examined the Child Abuse Potential Inventory (CAPI) (Milner, 1986) for items that reflected an Authoritarian parenting style. Items were reorganized into their own scale and parent's scores were evaluated in relation to their stress as measured by the Parenting Stress Index (Abidin, 1995). Results showed that, as expected, Latino parents scored higher on the Authoritarian Parenting values scale than Caucasian parents. However, results of analyses showed that for both groups, more authoritarian parenting style predicted greater dysfunction in the parent-child relationship. For Caucasian men who scored high on the CAPI created parenting values scale, this relation predicted higher levels of stress within the parental role. These findings suggest a need to evaluate culture as a part of assessing risk and issues in the parent child relationship.

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