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A study of communication and Hispanic cultural values within the family

Gabrielle Lafond

Communication Studies & Spanish

Sponsor: Professor Abran Salazar, Communication Studies

METHODS

I handed out questionnaires to 26 Hispanic-identifying students from the University of Rhode Island as well as from outside the university setting. Participants ranged in age from 19 to 24 years and were predominately female. Most participants reported they had two guardians and all reported they had at least one sibling. Seventeen participants stated that their race/ethnicity is very important to their sense of who they are and 21 reported that their family is very important to their sense of who they are.

Participants were given a questionnaire and told to complete it in approximately 20 minutes. The questionnaire assessed demographic information as well as levels of familism, respeto, and conflict.

DATA ANALYSIS

Hypotheses were analyzed using ANOVA (Analysis of Variance), a collection of statistical models used for analyzing differences in the group means of a sample, and the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (r), which measures linear correlation between two variables.

HOW COULD THE STUDY BE IMPROVED?

If I were to improve upon this study, I would seek out more Hispanic young adults in order to establish a larger sample size. In addition, I would have liked to spend more time conducting the literature review in order to find a conflict scale more suitable for the purposes of this study.

INTRODUCTION

Every human being has a unique communication style, which has often been carefully and significantly molded by family members during their upbringing. For my project, I focused on communication patterns and cultural values practiced by young adults within Hispanic families, specifically regarding the concepts of familism, respect, and conflict. Existing literature has generally examined these concepts independent of one another. Therefore, the present study is an important step toward examining the potential relationships between all three variables. Familism is a value often associated with Hispanic families and it revolves around the notion that family is paramount in a person's life. Respect, also known in the Spanish language as "respeto," is an important value in Hispanic families, as it is directly linked to the ways in which members treat one another. Hispanic children are often taught at a young age that they must show respect toward their elders, both through language and behavior. For my study, I was particularly interested in examining the relationships between familism, respect, and conflict style. The conflict styles I examined for the study were: competing, accommodating, avoiding, collaborating, and compromising. The proposed hypotheses were designed to assess relationships between conflict styles and familism, conflict styles and respeto, and familism and respeto.

FINDINGS

This study is currently under consideration for publication, therefore the results are being withheld from the general public.

WHAT I LEARNED

Prior to conducting this study, I had never collected original data or performed analyses using ANOVA, Pearson r , or related models of statistical examination. Now, I am familiar with the SPSS program and will be knowledgeable of its uses for future studies. Furthermore, in writing this paper in its entirety, I have vastly increased my understanding of APA style. The knowledge I have acquired in conducting this study has undoubtedly provided me with a solid set of skills for which I will rely on as I venture closer to becoming a published scholar.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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