

Perceived Discrimination and Fear of Deportation among Latino Immigrants in the U.S.

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Learning Objectives

- 1) Describe a method of measuring perceived discrimination among Latino immigrants in the U.S.
- 2) Evaluate the impact of perceived discrimination on fear of deportation among Latino immigrants in the U.S.

Background

Immigration Policies in the U.S.

- September 11, 2001 changed how immigration policies in the U.S. were enforced.
- Immigration violations began to be prosecuted as criminal offenses where they were previously treated as civil offenses.
- 2004 Arizona's Prop 200 aimed at undocumented immigrants
 - Required proof of citizenship to receive public benefits and social services.
 - Also required state and local government employees to report violations to immigration authorities.
- In 2007, over 700 bills related to immigration enforcement, employment, or to restrict immigrants' rights were introduced in Congress.
- 2010, Arizona's SB 1070
 - Made it a state crime to be an undocumented immigrant.
 - Authorized local authorities to stop individuals and ask for their immigration documents.

(Hernandez, 2005; Laglagaron et al., 2008; National Immigration Forum, 2004; Regen, Cary, & Kohler, 2004)

Discrimination

- Perceived and experienced discrimination among Latinos has been found to increase:
 - Stress
 - Depression
 - Anxiety
- More acculturated Latinos tend to perceive more discrimination.

(Becerra, 2010; Dawson, 2009; Edwards & Romero, 2008; Gee, Ryan, Laflamme, & Holt, 2006)

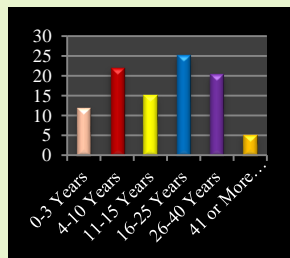
Methods

Data for this study were drawn from the 2007 Pew Hispanic Center survey of a disproportionate stratified RDD sample of 2,000 Latino adults living in the U.S. Interviews were conducted over the phone by an independent research company for the Pew Hispanic Center from October 3 through November 9, 2007 among a nationally representative sample of 2,000 Hispanic respondents ages 18 and older.

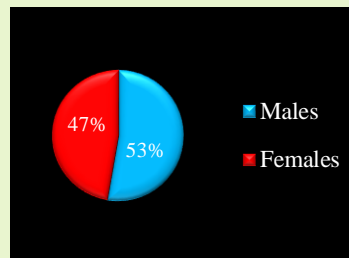
Sample

This study utilized the data from the 1,312 participants who identified themselves as Latino immigrants. Almost 53% of the participants in this study were male and over 47% were female. The mean age of the participants was 43 years old. The mean income was \$25,000 per year. Over 43% of the participants had less than a high school diploma.

Years in the U.S.



Gender



Measures

Gender was coded 0 for males and 1 for females

Age was recoded to 1= 18-25 years old to 6= 65 years old or older.

Income was recoded to 1= less than \$10,000 per year to 7= more than \$75,000 per year.

Level of education was coded 1= less than high school to 6= college graduate or higher.

Linguistic acculturation was a 3 item scale ($\alpha = .85$) created by questions regarding the participants' preference for taking the survey in English or Spanish and their ability to speak and read English.

Perceived discrimination was a 3 item scale ($\alpha = .75$). Participants were asked about discrimination in three areas: schools, workplace, and in preventing Latinos from succeeding in the U.S. The response options were recoded to 1= not a problem, 2= minor problem, 3= major problem. The scores on this scale ranged from 3 to 9 with higher scores indicating higher levels of perceived discrimination. The mean score for the *perceived discrimination* scale was 7.40 ($SD = 1.81$).

Outcome Variables

- 1) Fear of deportation
- 2) Quality of life
- 3) Use of government services

Results

	Fear of Deportation	Quality of Life	Use of Government Services
Gender	.001 (.098)	.129** (.042)	-.001 (.038)
Age	-.080** (.032)	-.018 (.020)	.036* (.018)
Education	-.053* (.023)	.050*** (.014)	-.001 (.013)
Income	-.003** (.001)	.064*** (.015)	-.049*** (.014)
Years in the U.S.	-.034 (.033)	.039 (.023)	.009 (.020)
Linguistic Acculturation	-.198*** (.045)	.139*** (.028)	-.058* (.028)
Perceived Discrimination	.313*** (.061)	-.172*** (.038)	-.054* (.023)
N	1,131	1,133	1,052
Adjusted R²	.097	.122	.003

*p < .05 **p < .01 ***p < .001
Unstandardized regression coefficients
Standard errors in parentheses

Results

- Results indicate that higher rates of *perceived discrimination* among the Latino immigrant participants were significantly related to:
 1. Higher rates of fear of deportation
 2. Lower perception of the quality of life
 3. Lower use of government

Conclusions

- Previous studies have found that higher levels of perceived discrimination have negative impacts on health, especially when combined with fear of deportation due to immigration status (Finch & Vega, 2003).
- The anti-immigration policies promoted by politicians and the media may create an environment that is hostile and discriminatory to all Latinos, regardless of documentation status.
- This study included both documented and undocumented Latino immigrants and the results suggest that documented immigrants may also feel discriminated.
- The results of this study also indicate that higher rates of perceived discrimination are related to lower use of government services.
- If higher rates of perceived discrimination have a negative impact on health and Latinos avoid seeking health care services as a result of fear of deportation, then not only may health issues for the individual worsen, but may put Latino immigrant communities at greater risk for more widespread health concerns.
- Social workers must work with public health officials to advocate for policies that will not have negative impacts on the health of Latino individuals and communities.
- Social workers must work with public health officials on health outreach and education to Latino immigrant communities.

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Using data from the Pew Hispanic Center of 1,312 Latino immigrants in the U.S. surveyed in 2007, this study examined the relationship between perceived discrimination and fear of deportation. Previous studies have found that higher levels of perceived discrimination have negative impacts on health such as increased stress, especially when combined with fear of deportation due to immigration status (Finch & Vega, 2003). Unlike previous studies, however, this study utilized a national representative sample.

Utilizing OLS linear regressions, the results of this study indicated that Latino immigrants who had higher levels of perceived discrimination, also had higher levels of fear of deportation for themselves or a loved one.

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