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Acculturation Conflict, Cultural Parenting Self-Efficacy, and Perceived Parenting Competence in
Asian American and Latino/a Families

Abstract

Parents from immigrant backgrounds must deal with normative parenting demands as well as unique challenges associated with acculturation processes. The current study examines the independent and interactive influences of acculturation conflict and cultural parenting self-efficacy (e.g., parents' confidence in instilling heritage, American, and bicultural values in their children) on perceptions of general parenting competence. Using data from 58 Asian American and 153 Latin American parents of children in grades 6-12, ethnic differences were also explored. Results suggest that lower acculturation conflict is associated with higher perceptions of general parenting competence for both Asian and Latin American parents. Higher cultural parenting self-efficacy is associated with higher perceived general parenting competence for Latino/a parents only. One significant interaction was found, and only for Asian Americans, whereby the negative association between acculturation conflict and perceptions of parenting competence was weaker for those who felt efficacious in transmitting heritage messages. Results are discussed in light of clinical implications and the need for further recognition and study of culturally-relevant factors and frameworks among families from immigrant backgrounds.

Acculturation Conflict, Cultural Parenting Self-Efficacy, and Perceived Parenting Competence in
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Parenting among families from immigrant backgrounds is uniquely challenging and rewarding (Garcia Coll & Pachter, 2002). Above and beyond normative parenting demands, challenges for parents with a history of immigrant experiences include pressure to adapt to the mainstream environment while considering what heritage identity and values to retain and pass down to their children (Jambunathan, Burts, & Pierce, 2000). Although these pressures might be especially salient for parents with direct immigration experiences (i.e., those who are foreign-born), research suggests that acculturation processes are relevant for many generations to come, including for parents from second and later generations (Rumbaut, 2004). As such, examining the role of culture in the parenting perceptions of immigrant parents, defined as those who have immigrated themselves (e.g., first generation) or who were U.S.-born and whose own parents or earlier ancestors were immigrants (e.g., second generation and beyond), is particularly vital.

Despite being highly relevant to the experience of immigration, issues of acculturation and culturally-specific constructs of parenting self-efficacy have rarely been recognized as predictors of parents' perceived competence, defined in the current study as the degree to which parents feel capable in their parenting role in general (Abidin, 1995). At the same time, theory and research have highlighted the importance of acknowledging cultural influences in child development (e.g., Garcia Coll and colleagues' [1996] integrated model of development), and the relevance of culture in promoting positive outcomes (e.g., Berry's [2003] bicultural identity). Thus, there is a need for systematic integration of these issues with the traditional parenting literature.

The goal of the present research was to address this need to merge these largely disparate literatures—on parents' sense of general competence and culturally-relevant parenting issues—to

learn more about the parenting context among families from immigrant backgrounds. It is important to examine these issues among parents who have immigrated themselves as well as those who were U.S.-born, the latter of which are especially understudied in the field. As depicted in Figure 1, we examined how parent-child acculturation conflict and the perceptions of parenting self-efficacy that are specifically linked to cultural socialization goals are independently and interactively related to perceptions of general parenting competence among Asian American and Latino/a parents, who represent the two most rapidly growing but still understudied immigrant populations in the U.S. today (U.S. Census, 2011). Understanding these links has key implications for contributing to theoretical knowledge and informing the possible development of effective, culturally-sensitive intervention programs to optimize parenting and child outcomes.

Culturally-Relevant Correlates of Perceived Parenting Competence

Although theoretical and empirical foundations of perceived parenting competence continue to be largely based on Western and Eurocentric perspectives (Teti & Candelaria, 2008), many scholars agree that parenting needs to be considered in light of the cultural contexts and specific environments in which it occurs (Coard, Wallace, Stevenson, & Brotman, 2004; Jensen & Dost-Gozkan, 2015). For instance, Ogbu's (1981) long-standing cultural-ecological model is one theoretical framework that has explicitly touted the importance of culture in driving parenting attitudes, perceptions, and behavioral practices. Garcia Coll and colleagues' (1996) integrative model similarly delineates cultural factors in structuring childrearing contexts and the subsequent developmental competencies of children from ethnic minority backgrounds. Additionally, the idea that culture can enhance or mitigate the association between a person's perceptions and behaviors (Bandura, 2002) has garnered empirical attention and support in the parenting literature (Ardelt & Eccles, 2001; Dumka, Gonzales, Wheeler, & Millsap, 2010; Elder, Eccles, Ardel, & Lord, 1995). With these frameworks in mind, we focused on two culturally-specific sources of

parenting challenge and growth—the perceived acculturation conflict between parents and children, and parents’ task-specific self-efficacy in effectively transmitting cultural socialization messages to their children. Parental perception of general parenting competence was the key outcome of interest due to its overall, pervasive importance for parenting practices and child development (Coleman & Karraker, 1998).

Parent-child acculturation conflict. Acculturation broadly refers to the social change that occurs when two or more cultural groups come into contact, with cultural conflict as one predictable outcome of such change (Trimble, 2003). Acculturation processes can introduce diverse parenting challenges. For instance, acculturative differences between parents and children has been linked to family disturbances and a variety of child, family, and parenting outcomes (Birman, 2006; Buki, Ma, Strom, & Strom, 2003; Chun & Akutsu, 2003). Such acculturation differences can be real or perceived, but much of the literature suggests that perceptions might be more influential than objective differences (Telzer, 2010). For instance, Smokowski, Rose, and Bacallao (2008) found that more perceived acculturation conflicts were associated with more family dysfunction, but actual differences were not.

Whether defined as experienced or perceived, parent-child acculturation conflict is often referred to as an *acculturation gap*. The most commonly studied form of acculturation conflict occurs when children are more “Americanized” than are their parents. Such conflict tends to be particularly salient during the adolescent years when children’s heritage values might be at odds with the American emphasis on gaining autonomy and independence, and when identity development is often at the forefront in individuals’ lives (Perez-Brena, Updegraff, & Umana-Taylor, 2015; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). However, in understanding this line of work, it is important to recognize that the condition whereby youth are more assimilated than parents does not inevitably lead to poor outcomes, and different constellations of the acculturation gap can also

exist (Telzer, 2010). For example, some research with Mexican American families has shown that youth conduct problems are actually more prevalent when children identify with their heritage culture more so than their parents do (Lau, McCabe, Yeh, Garland, Wood, & Hough, 2005). Other work has also found inconsistent support for the contention that a perceived acculturation gap or parent-child acculturation conflict is necessarily detrimental (e.g., Gil, Vega, & Diman, 1994; Vega, Khoury, Zimmerman, Gil, & Warheit, 1995).

Certainly, more work should be directed towards explicating the role of acculturation conflict in youth development and family processes. Developmentally, issues of acculturation can become particularly challenging as a result of power shifts when adolescents gain responsibility and act as language or cultural brokers for their parents (Smokowski et al., 2008). Thus, studying the impact of acculturation conflict on parenting perceptions at the transition into and during the adolescent years is of utmost significance.

In terms of parenting more specifically, cultural adjustment often brings with it uncertainty and instability, and might make parents feel less competent in their general parenting role (Dumka et al., 2010; Levine, 1980). During the process of acculturation, parents can be at risk of losing social support for their heritage values, including their parenting attitudes and beliefs, as they adapt in an environment that could contradict their worldview (Ochocka & Janzen, 2008). These adjustment challenges have the potential to place considerable stress on family dynamics and relationships, and potentially undermine parents' perceptions of general parenting confidence and success (Juang, Syed, Cookston, Wang, & Kim, 2012). However, no work of which we are aware has directly linked acculturation conflict to parents' feelings of general parenting competence, which we operationalize as a global sense of parenting comfort and capability (Abiden, 1995). We addressed this literature gap and expected that the challenges

associated with acculturation, as measured by the perceived conflict that arises when parents' and children's values are discordant, would be related to lower perceived parenting competence.

Cultural parenting self-efficacy. Drawing on Bandura's (1997) social cognitive theory, parenting self-efficacy (PSE) can be defined as parents' assessments of their ability to influence their children in important and meaningful ways. Diverse implications of PSE have been identified, including for a wide array of parenting practices and child outcomes (e.g., Dumka et al., 2010; Glatz & Buchanan, 2015a; for a review, see Jones & Prinz, 2005). To date, PSE has been mostly measured at global (e.g., general effectiveness) and task-specific levels (e.g., discipline, helping with homework) with little attention to culture, despite Bandura's (2002) emphasis that the development, structure, implementation, and purpose of self-efficacy varies across contexts. The current study introduces the construct of *cultural PSE*, which we define as the extent to which parents believe that they can effectively instill cultural knowledge, values, and pride in their children. More specifically, acculturation processes suggest that there are multiple dimensions to consider as parents strategically negotiate between teaching children heritage values while also facilitating mainstream integration and involvement (Jambunathan et al., 2000; Smokowski et al., 2008). Hence, in contrast to perceptions of general parenting competence, our conceptualization of cultural PSE focuses on parents' targeted perceptions of their capability to have a direct impact on their children concerning socialization within three distinct cultural domains—heritage, American, and bicultural (both heritage and American).

Heritage PSE. Ethnic socialization refers to direct and indirect messages that parents communicate to their children about their cultural background and ancestry, and can include messages regarding social status and fitting in with mainstream society (Hughes et al., 2006). There is some evidence that some parents from ethnic minority backgrounds incorporate ethnic socialization practices into their overall parenting strategies, and that positive messages about

one's heritage background can benefit children's ethnic identity and adjustment (Caughy, O'Campo, Randolph, & Nickerson, 2002). For instance, through qualitative interviews, Coard et al. (2004) found that African American mothers commonly acknowledged the need to engage in positive racial socialization practices, but felt frustrated, guilty, and conflicted about their ability to do so. Indeed, despite the recognized importance of ethnic socialization, little work has examined parents' confidence or self-efficacy in their socialization efforts. We thus defined heritage PSE as one dimension of cultural PSE that reflects parents' beliefs about their perceptions of self-efficacy or their ability to influence their child's identification and involvement with their cultural ancestry and heritage background.

American PSE. Parenting success among immigrant families also incorporates the need to help children navigate multicultural worlds. Hence, our definition of cultural PSE involves parents' perceptions about being able to promote and teach their children not only their ethnic heritage, but also the mainstream culture. Prior work has demonstrated the positive effects of U.S. cultural involvement for families from immigrant backgrounds (Smokowski et al., 2008), and parents likely vary in how efficacious they feel in helping their children assimilate in a culture with which they might not be familiar. Indeed, a qualitative study of immigrants in Canada found that the majority of parents expressed strong desires to maintain their cultural and religious traditions; however, many also cared about their children's mainstream assimilation, and some prioritized such assimilation over retaining their cultural heritage (Ochocka & Janzen, 2008). For many parents, particularly those of the first-generation, perceived confidence in the ability to help children integrate into the mainstream culture can therefore represent another key dimension within the construct of cultural PSE.

Bicultural PSE. Socialization that encourages biculturalism or comfort in negotiating both heritage and mainstream cultures, and the ability to function effectively in multiple cultural

contexts, encompasses additional parenting strategies that are particularly relevant to immigrant parents (Jambunathan et al., 2000). Although heritage and mainstream identification has sometimes been viewed as two ends of a single spectrum, orthogonal approaches suggest that they are two separate dimensions and that biculturalism can also be viewed as an independent construct in and of itself (Berry, 2003). With such conceptualizations in mind, we thus considered bicultural PSE as a unique dimension defined as parents' self-efficacy in combining both heritage and mainstream practices and traditions in their parenting strategies.

Taken together, the current study introduces cultural PSE as an important construct to consider in the context of parenting, and as a possible contributor to parents' perceived general parenting competence. We delineated three different dimensions of cultural PSE and expected that higher cultural PSE, in terms of all three aspects of heritage, American mainstream, and bicultural socialization, would be positively linked to perceived parenting competence. In addition to these direct links, we also explored whether the three dimensions of cultural PSE moderate the presumed negative association between acculturation conflict and parents' perceptions of general parenting competence.

Ethnicity of Immigrant Parents

Theory and research, including Bandura's (1989) social cognitive theory, suggest that context and culture can influence parenting attitudes, perceptions of self-efficacy, and other outcomes (Buchanan, Grzywacz, & Costa, 2013; Glatz & Buchanan, 2015b; Jones & Prinz, 2005). The current study targets parents from Asian American and Latino/a backgrounds to examine the role of ethnicity in predicting perceived parenting competence, acculturation conflict, cultural PSE, and the relations among them. Asians and Latino/as share some experiences and cultural values (e.g., family orientation), and both groups are cultural minorities in the U.S. (Jensen & Dost-Gozkan, 2015). In terms of parenting, some evidence suggests that

Asian and Latino/a parents might be more similar than different, especially when compared to European Americans. For instance, Okagaki and Frensch (1998) found that European American parents reported higher levels of academic PSE compared to Asian and Latin American parents.

However, despite shared minority experiences, Asian Americans and Latino/as have different immigration histories and face different treatment by the U.S. majority; for these reasons and others, assumptions that their parenting experiences are identical would be misguided. For example, in a study including Asian and Latin Americans, Steinberg, Dornbusch, and Brown (1992) found that the links between parenting measures and child outcomes did vary by ethnicity. The consequences of parenting practices and their predictors (e.g., warmth) have also been found to vary by ethnicity (Chao, 2001; Jackson-Newsom, Buchanan, & McDonald, 2008). Gonzales and colleagues (2006) similarly found that links between acculturation conflict and parenting were consistent among some ethnic groups, but not Latin Americans. Hence, it is important to consider ethnic differences in the variables of interest here, as well as ethnicity as a potential moderator of associations.

The Current Study

The present study extends knowledge of parenting in immigrant families by using a cultural framework to examine acculturation conflict and three dimensions of cultural PSE as predictors of perceived general parenting competence among Asians and Latino/as in the U.S. Specifically, we addressed two primary research questions: (1) is more acculturation conflict reported by parents related to less perceived parenting competence, and (2) is more cultural PSE with regard to heritage, American, and bicultural socialization related to more perceived parenting competence? Our second research question also explores the relative impact of each cultural PSE dimension. Although all three (i.e., heritage, American, bicultural) are likely important, one might be more or less strongly linked to parenting competence than another.

According to Bandura (1997), individuals with high self-efficacy are not only motivated to perform well and invest time and effort into their overarching goals, but also persist in the face of challenge or adversity. As such, we posed a third research question: (3) does cultural PSE serve as a buffer in situations when perceptions of general parenting competence might be challenged, such as in the face of acculturation conflict? Cultural PSE might function this way because it can allow parents to remain confident and positive despite acculturation obstacles and to interpret such obstacles as temporary and ultimately surmountable. Likewise, it is possible that low cultural PSE could exacerbate acculturative parenting challenges and, thus, the negative link between acculturation conflict and parenting competence might be stronger when parents report low cultural PSE.

In all analyses, we explored possible differences across Asian and Latino/a parents in terms of mean or average levels of targeted parenting variables, as well as in terms of their inter-relations. We also controlled for key demographic variables, including family income, whether or not parents were born in the U.S., and child grade.

Method

Procedures

Data were derived from a larger project including a nationally representative sample of parents collected in the U.S. Parents were recruited through Qualtrics Panel, a large database of respondents managed by Qualtrics, and they responded to questions through a secure Internet-based platform. Members of Qualtrics Panel who qualified for the study (i.e., parents of children in 6th to 12th grade within one of the following ethnic groups: Caucasian, African American, Latin American, Asian American) received a message through their membership portal involving information about the survey (e.g., how long the survey was expected to take). To avoid self-selection bias, the survey invitation did not include specific details about the survey contents.

Upon providing informed consent, participants filled out the survey, which took about 40 minutes to complete. All study materials were available only in English. If parents had multiple children in the specified age range, they were asked in the beginning of the survey, randomly, to answer the questions about their youngest child, a middle child (for parents of three or more children), or oldest child. After the survey, parents were given a debriefing statement, which described the study's purpose and thanked them for participating. Data from children were not collected.

Participants

The sample in the larger project ($N = 1,077$) was ethnically representative according to national Census data (U.S. Census, 2011) and included 703 European Americans (65%), 168 Latin Americans (16%), 140 African Americans (13%), and 66 Asian Americans (6%). The total sample was equally distributed over parents' gender (540 mothers and 537 fathers). The majority of the participants reported on their biological child (90%), but some parents reported on their adoptive child (5%) or step-child (5%). Given its particular relevance among families with immigrant backgrounds, cultural PSE was assessed only among parents who self-identified as either Latin American ($n = 153$) or Asian American ($n = 58$).

As summarized in Table 1, of these final participants (total $N = 211$), 65% were fathers and 35% were mothers, and the majority were born in the U.S. (78%). Of the parents who were foreign-born ($n=47$), the mean number of years that they reported living in the U.S. was 24.91 ($SD = 13.87$) with a range of six to 52 years. Among this subsample of foreign-born parents, number of years living the U.S. was not significantly correlated with any of our key study variables. For ease of interpretation, we used a dichotomous variable to indicate parent nativity in our subsequent models.

Of the children, 58% were boys and 42% were girls, and they were distributed in the following way: Grade 6 = 11%, grade 7 = 19%, grade 8 = 16%, grade 9 = 8%, grade 10 = 20%,

grade 11 = 7%, and grade 12 = 19%. Yearly family income was distributed as follows: Less than \$20,000 (5%), \$20,000-\$37,999 (15%), \$38,000-61,999 (28%), \$62,000-\$101,000 (31%), and over \$101,000 (21%). Concerning parent education, 2% had less than a high school education, 15% had a high school education only, 20% had some college or vocational education, 40% had a college degree only, and 23% had a graduate or professional degree.

Measures

Acculturation conflict. Parents reported on 10 statements from the Asian American Family Conflict Scale (Lee, Choe, Kim, & Ngo, 2000) to describe their relationship with their child, specifically focusing on how often they disagreed on certain aspects related to acculturation. Prior work has largely focused on adolescents' perceptions of conflict, but modifications to assess parents' perceptions have been successful (Kim, 2011). This scale has also been successfully adapted to measure family conflict among Latino/a families (author citation). Sample items read, "I tell my child what to do with his/her life, but my child wants to make his/her own decisions," "I want my child to sacrifice personal interest for the sake of the family, but he/she feels this is unfair," and, "I demand that my child always shows respect for elders, but my child believes in showing respect only if someone deserves it." The response options ranged from 1 (*Almost never*) to 5 (*Almost always*). The Cronbach's alpha was .92.

Cultural PSE. Three questions were developed specifically for this project to assess cultural PSE. The underlying idea was to capture parents' beliefs about their ability to influence their target adolescent child's cultural identification, which involves both culture of origin and the American culture. Following self-efficacy theory (Bandura, 2006) and modeled on existing task-specific PSE scales, the questions asked what parents *can do* rather than what parents *will do*: "How much can you do to get your child to practice the customs of your culture of origin?", "How much can you do to help your child combine Hispanic/Asian and non-Hispanic/non-Asian

ways of doing things?”, and “How much can you do to instill in your child a sense of what it means to be an ‘American’?”. Responses were given on a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*Nothing*) to 9 (*A great deal*). These questions were piloted in an early subset ($n = 24$) of the larger sample. Before being distributed to the remaining sample, we examined correlations among the three items, as well as between the items and other self-efficacy and parenting competence scales. The strength and direction of these correlations were as expected.

A confirmatory factor analysis of the complete data showed that the three items loaded strongly onto one factor (loadings ranging from .82 to .92). However, because the items were developed to capture conceptually-meaningful and qualitatively different socialization goals regarding culture of origin, American culture, and bicultural aspects of cultural PSE, we used them as separate variables in the models.

Perceived general parenting competence. We used the competence subscale from the Parenting Stress Index (Abidin, 1995) to measure parents’ perceptions of competence in their parenting role. This subscale represents parent characteristics as one domain and source of parenting stress that might, in turn, lead to problems in the child or parents’ behavior. There are 12 items in the original subscale, but one was excluded as it asked about parenting infants and was not applicable to the parents in this sample. Items were scored on a 1 (*Strongly agree*) to 5 (*Strongly disagree*) scale and scores were coded such that higher numbers reflect more perceived competence. Cronbach’s alpha was .75.

Statistical Analyses

We first examined descriptive statistics for and correlations among our primary study variables, including the novel construct of cultural PSE. We next examined main and interactive effects of acculturation conflict and cultural PSE on parents’ perceptions of general parenting competence adapting a path model in Mplus 7.11 (Muthén & Muthén, 1998-2012) with the

Maximum Likelihood estimator. Three indices were used to evaluate model fit: The comparative fit index, (CFI), the Tucker-Lewis index (TLI), and the root mean square error of approximation, (RMSEA). CFI and TLI values above .90 and RMSEA values of .06 or lower are considered indicators of an acceptable fit between the hypothesized model and the observed data (Hu & Bentler, 1999).

To examine the moderating impact of cultural PSE on the link between acculturation conflict and parents' perceived competence, we computed two-way interactions using mean-centered variables of acculturation conflict and cultural PSE (the three items separately). These three interaction terms were then used as additional predictors of parents' perceived competence. For significant interactions, we used one standard deviation (*SD*) below and above the mean of the moderator to plot the interaction, and we examined (a) if the steepness of the two slopes was significantly different from zero, and (b) if the steepness of the two slopes differed from each other (i.e., if one slope was significantly more steep than the other).

To examine possible ethnic differences in the main effects of acculturation conflict and cultural PSE on parents' perceived parenting competence, we used ethnicity (Latino/a parents versus Asian American parents) as a grouping variable in the path models described above. This was done by placing equality constraints between Asian American and Latino/a parents on all main effects and, thereafter, freeing one path at a time to examine if this significantly improved the χ^2 of the models. In the final models, equality constraints were kept on estimates that did not differ significantly between the two groups of parents. In all analyses, we controlled for parents' nativity (born in the U.S. or not), family income, and target adolescent children's grade in school.

Results

Descriptive Statistics and Preliminary Analyses

To gain a better understanding of the characteristics of our sample, we first explored

whether ethnicity was associated with key background variables. Two chi-square tests showed that ethnicity was significantly associated with income, $\chi^2(4) = 15.74, p = .003$, and with whether parents were born in the U.S., $\chi^2(1) = 23.50, p < .001$. More Latino/a parents than expected were in the lower income categories and fewer were in the higher income categories. The opposite pattern was found among Asian American parents (i.e., more Asian American parents than expected had higher income and fewer than expected had lower income). Finally, more Latino/a parents (86%) than Asian American parents (55%) were born in the U.S.

Means, standard deviations, and bivariate correlations among all study variables (separately by ethnic group) are reported in Table 2. The results of *t*-tests examining differences in study variables by ethnicity are also reported. As shown, two ethnic differences in means were found. Latino/a parents reported significantly higher cultural PSE than did Asian American parents on the dimensions regarding efficacy in helping their child to identify with their culture of origin (i.e., heritage PSE), $t(209) = 2.16; p = .032$, and the dimension regarding efficacy in fostering a sense of what it means to be American, $t(209) = 2.43; p = .016$. With respect to correlations, for both Latino/a and Asian American parents, lower levels of acculturation conflict were significantly linked to higher perceived general parenting competence. Further, among Latino/a parents only, higher levels of all three dimensions of cultural PSE were associated with a higher sense of perceived parenting competence.

Main and Interactive Effects of Acculturation Conflict and Cultural PSE on Perceived Parenting Competence

In three different path models, one for each cultural PSE variable, we examined the main effects of acculturation conflict and cultural PSE on parents' perceptions of general competence. Additionally, in each of these models, we included the interaction term between the cultural PSE item and acculturation conflict. We examined possible ethnic differences and controlled for

whether parents had lived their entire life in the U.S. (i.e., nativity; yes/no), family income, and the target adolescent child's grade in school. Finally, in all models, correlations among the predictors were estimated. The path models for the heritage, $\chi^2 = 12.66$ (16), $p = .698$, RMSEA = .00, CFI = 1.00, TLI = 1.05; bicultural, $\chi^2 = 13.31$ (16), $p = .650$, RMSEA = .00, CFI = 1.00, TLI = 1.03; and American, $\chi^2 = 16.36$ (16), $p = .428$, RMSEA = .02, CFI = .99, TLI = 1.00, PSE variables showed good fit to the data. The results from these models are reported in Table 3.

Main effects of the control variables. In all path models, higher family income was significantly associated with higher levels of perceived general parenting competence (bs .07 – .10, $p < .05$). With other variables controlled, however, nativity and child's grade were not significant predictors of perceptions of parenting competence in any of the three models.

Main effects of acculturation conflict and cultural PSE. In all path models, more acculturation conflict was linked to lower perceived general parenting competence (bs -.22 – -.25, $p < .001$), and these associations were not significantly different for Latin and Asian American parents. Hence, acculturation conflict negatively predicted perceived parenting competence for both ethnic groups. Concerning the links between cultural PSE and perceived parenting competence, however, ethnic differences were found in the strength of these associations. Specifically, the positive associations between cultural PSE items and perceived parenting competence were significantly stronger among Latin American parents than among Asian American parents [heritage: $\chi^2\Delta = 4.19$ (1), $p = .041$; bicultural: $\chi^2\Delta = 6.44$ (1), $p = .011$; and American: $\chi^2\Delta = 4.76$ (1), $p = .029$]. In fact, although the directions of effects were similarly positive, cultural PSE variables were not significant predictors of parenting competence among Asian American parents.

Interaction effects. The interaction term including acculturation conflict and the heritage PSE variable (i.e., “How much can you do to get your child to practice the customs of your

culture of origin”) was a significant predictor of perceived general parenting competence for Asian American parents ($b = .07, p < .05$) but not for Latino/a parents ($b = .03, ns$). This interaction is depicted in Figure 2 and shows that, in general, more acculturation conflict was linked to lower perceived parenting competence, but this correlation was significantly stronger for Asian Americans who reported lower heritage PSE than for those who reported higher heritage PSE. The two slopes differed significantly from each other in steepness, $\chi^2\Delta = 5.03 (1), p = .025$. In fact, simple slope tests showed that the slope representing parents with high heritage PSE (i.e., the slope set at 1 *SD* above the mean on the PSE variable) was only marginally significantly different from zero ($b = -.14, p = .058$), whereas the slope representing parents with low heritage PSE (i.e., the slope set at 1 *SD* below the mean on the PSE variable) was significantly different from zero ($b = -.041, SE = 0.10, p < .000$). The interaction terms including acculturation conflict and the bicultural and American PSE variables were not significant predictors of perceptions of parenting competence for either Latin or Asian Americans.

Discussion

Perceived general parenting competence is a highly relevant developmental construct to understand beyond the parenting literature’s largely Eurocentric focus (Teti & Candelaria, 2008). Self-perceptions of parenting are particularly important to consider among families with immigrant backgrounds given the distinctive challenges and opportunities in parenting when one is immersed in a cultural environment with potentially disparate values from the mainstream culture (Cheah, Leung, & Zhou, 2013; Ochocka & Janzen, 2008). In this study, we aimed to bridge theoretical perspectives that have, on the one hand, emphasized the importance of parenting self-efficacy and perceived parenting competence but without a strong cultural focus (Bandura, 1997; Coleman & Karraker, 1998) with, on the other hand, views that have recognized the importance of cultural factors in child development but without explicitly attending to

parenting competence (Berry, 2003; Garcia Coll et al., 1996). We did this by examining two culturally-relevant variables—acculturation conflict, cultural PSE—as main and interactive predictors of perceived general parenting competence among Latino/a and Asian American parents. We also investigated possible ethnic differences across parents and controlled for key demographic variables such as family income, parents’ nativity, and child grade.

In terms of acculturation conflict, we found that the more Asian and Latino/a parents perceive that they and their children experience conflict on issues related to acculturation, the less general parenting competence they report. Although it is possible that any form of conflict, whether acculturation-based or not, diminishes parents’ sense of competence or self-efficacy (Glatz & Buchanan, 2015b), these results point to the importance of considering acculturation conflict as one source of family stress with direct implications for parenting attitudes among immigrant and ethnic minority parents (Telzer, 2010).

Yet, in the face of acculturation conflict, there are cultural aspects of parenting that might buffer negative developments and offer potential rewards. For instance, we examined whether cultural PSE would be positively related to perceptions of general parenting competence and help parents maintain perceptions of parenting competence when they face challenges in relation to parenting children in a culture different from their culture of origin (i.e., acculturation conflict). Indeed, one of the strengths of the current study was its direct measurement of parents’ perceived efficacy around the specific task of being able to instill cultural messages in their children. Research on ethnic socialization has tended to focus on the different ways that parents can instill cultural traditions and messages to children, but there is essentially no work that has examined how efficacious parents feel about actually transmitting these messages (Coard et al., 2004; Hughes et al., 2006). Moreover, the design of our cultural PSE measure incorporates not only parents’ perceived effectiveness in transmitting values and traditions related to their own heritage

culture, but also the important dimensions of mainstream and bicultural socialization (Jambunathan et al., 2000; Smokowski et al., 2008).

In terms of ethnic group differences, Latin American parents in our sample reported significantly higher average levels of heritage and American cultural PSE compared to Asian American parents. Additionally, all three cultural PSE dimensions (i.e., heritage, American, bicultural) were associated with more perceived general parenting competence, but only among Latino/a families. Although more work that systematically examines ethnic variations is needed, we speculate that the greater similarity between Latino and U.S. culture, coupled with the common stereotype that Asians are “forever foreigners” and unassimilable (Tuan, 1998), could explain why Latino/a parents reported higher cultural PSE. Latino/a parents might find it easier to negotiate cultural differences and transmit cultural socialization messages to their children, which, in turn, is positive for their general sense of parenting competence. For Asian Americans, the impact of acculturation conflict for perceived parenting competence might be more important than their cultural PSE alone.

Another explanation for these different effects for Latino/a and Asian parents could be due to generational status. The majority of Latin American parents were of the second generation, whereas the Asian American parents were more evenly split between the first and second generations. Although parents’ number of years in the U.S. was not significantly correlated with cultural PSE items, unique cultural and acculturative variation between these groups could have driven some of the differences found. More work in this area should investigate these possible explanations and further examine similarities and differences between Latino/a and Asian families, including whether our PSE items are interpreted in the same way across ethnicities.

In contrast, it was only among Asian American parents that cultural PSE served to buffer the association between higher levels of acculturation conflict and lower levels of perceived parenting competence. In the face of acculturation conflict, Asian American parents who felt confident in instilling heritage values in their children reported higher perceptions of parenting competence than parents who felt less efficacious. Perhaps the strong cultural values that are presumably held by these parents allow them to withstand acculturation stress, to view such acculturation conflict as temporary, and to remain optimistic in their general parenting skills. Consistent with Bandura's (1997) perspectives, our results suggest that heritage cultural PSE provides the motivation and fortitude that parents need to maintain a sense of general parenting competence in the face of acculturation challenges. An alternative scenario is one of highly involved parents who are steadfast in their abilities to instill or even force cultural values onto their children, perhaps believing that their influence is greater than it really is.

It is unclear why this interaction was found only for Asian Americans and not Latino/as. For Latino/a parents, acculturation conflict appears more consistently related to general parenting competence, suggesting that their cultural experiences are more closely tied to their overall parenting cognitions. Conversely, for Asians, the direct links between conflict and parenting perceptions are less clear and have the propensity to be shaped by other culturally relevant parenting variables. Perhaps uncovering more specific cultural values (e.g., familismo among Latino/a families versus filial piety among Asians) could lead to a more nuanced understanding of these groups' distinctive characteristics. Rather than assuming broad commonalities in these groups' emphasis on collective, family values, it could be that more specific or concrete parenting behaviors (e.g., warmth, closeness) are what distinguish Asian American experiences from those of Latino/as and other ethnicities (Chao & Tseng, 2002). Other distinguishing factors (e.g., societal treatment, numerical representation, language) could also be responsible for the

differential effects found. Indeed, prior work suggests similarities as well as differences among Asians and Latino/as who share some cultural and family values, yet have distinct immigration histories (Jensen & Dost-Gozkan, 2015; Steinberg et al., 1992). As such, future research should better examine pre- and post-migration circumstances (e.g., generation, income, social capital) that might provide different contexts of development for Latin and Asian American families.

Implications for Family Therapy and Clinical Practice

In terms of broader implications, our findings suggest that cultural experiences play a highly salient role in determining parenting attitudes and perceptions. More specifically, the potential stress associated with a family's history of immigration, as reflected through our measure of acculturation conflict, might undermine parents' perceptions of general competence. Indeed, these results are consistent with prior work finding that acculturation conflict is a particularly strong risk factor for family dysfunction among Latin American families (Smokowski et al., 2008). Clinicians working with Latino/a and/or Asian American families should therefore be encouraged to address potential sources of acculturation conflict directly. In doing so, however, it would be important for therapists and clinicians to consider possible nuances and variations related to the impact of acculturation conflict (e.g., constellation of the actual acculturation gap, whether the conflict is real or perceived) (Lau et al., 2005; Telzer, 2010).

At the same time, acculturation conflict does not comprise the entire picture. Issues of cultural identification among both children and parents, the consideration of values and traditions of both mainstream and heritage cultures, and possible implications related to the community and receiving contexts of immigrant families are also important to evaluate within the clinical context and in treatment planning (Schwartz, Unger, Zamboanga, & Szapocznik, 2010). Specifically, our results support the use of coping strategies or cultural resources to ameliorate the negative effects

of acculturation conflict. For example, increasing parents' self-efficacy in culturally socializing their children in both heritage and mainstream ways could prove fruitful in clinical practice for enhancing general parenting competence, especially among parents from Latin American backgrounds, given that perceived general parenting competence is particularly important for engaged and effective parenting of adolescents (e.g., Glatz & Buchanan, 2015a). Moreover, boosting cultural PSE among Asian American parents could constitute a key cultural resource to help parents withstand the negative impact of acculturation conflict on their feelings of general parenting competence. Hence, helping parents from immigrant backgrounds feel confident about their cultural socialization is likely to carry some benefits, although the effects could be direct or indirect depending on the individual or situation involved.

Parenting interventions should be culturally-relevant and tied to real-world experiences (Coard et al., 2004). Although far less work has focused specifically on Asian American than Latino/a families, culturally-sensitive parenting intervention programs framed by ecological theory have been shown to be effective in prior work with immigrant families, and developing further ways for families to cope with acculturation stress and increase bicultural skills or bicultural competence could be fruitful (Stein & Guzman, 2015). For example, existing intervention work has pointed to the importance of family-oriented bicultural skills training (Bacallao & Smokowski, 2005). Similarly, interventions that include biculturalism as a core program component have proven to be particularly effective among Latino/a immigrant families (Parra-Cardona, Lopez-Zeron, Rodriguez, Escobar-Chew, Whitehead, Sullivan, & Bernal, 2015). Our results certainly support these clinical efforts.

To advance knowledge and application even further, Stein and Guzman (2015) propose a translational approach that views culturally-relevant factors (e.g., cultural values, acculturation experiences) as not only outcomes of interventions, but also as potential moderators. Consistent

with their emphasis on considering cultural variables, another practical implication of our results is to recognize how acculturation conflict, as a predictor of general parenting competence, could be targeted as both an outcome and as a family variable that might increase the overall effectiveness of family therapy or culturally-based intervention programs. That is, decreasing the acculturation conflict that is perceived between parents and children could serve to increase parenting competence directly, as well as increase overall family closeness and communication, which could then enhance the likelihood of a family's successful response to practice or a clinical intervention. Clinical approaches and intervention programs could also take a more contextual approach and identify specific situations in which such parenting success in establishing a strong sense of children's cultural identity as a result of cultural PSE might be facilitated, and other situations in which additional variables (e.g., acculturation conflict) might serve as impediments.

Limitations and Future Directions

Despite the meaningful implications of our study, several limitations should be noted. Both Asians and Latino/as represent highly heterogeneous groups, and our method of data collection and relatively small sample did not allow us to investigate possible intra-group differences, which might be even more meaningful than the differences found across groups (Bandura, 2002; Pinderhughes et al., 2008). For example, as described in some of the interpretations of our results, the majority of our Latino/a sample and about half of our Asian American sample were U.S.-born and at least of the second generation. Although acculturation conflict and related cultural issues tend to persist across generations, future work that is better designed to systematically explore possible intragroup differences by generational status is needed, particularly since prior work has pointed to inconsistent and nuanced differences across generations (Perez-Brena et al., 2015; Rumbaut, 2004; Telzer, 2010).

It is also important to explore other possible intragroup differences at individual, family, and contextual levels including, but limited to, gender, cultural values, family constellation, and socioeconomic status (Updegraff & Umana-Taylor, 2015). Given that many parenting studies in the field rely solely on reports from mothers, our sample was relatively unique. Although our sample was too small to systematically test for meaningful differences across mothers and fathers, further work and replication focusing on potential differences and similarities in immigrant parenting across both parents should be worthwhile. For instance, emerging work suggests that parenting self-efficacy is linked to actual parenting practices for mothers, but not for fathers (Glatz & Buchanan, 2015a). Another direction for future work is to explore and understand sibling relationships in cultural family processes. Recent work indeed highlights the role of sibling intimacy in the dynamic associations between parent-child relationships and cultural values among families of Mexican origin (Killoren, Wheeler, Updegraff, de Jesus, Sue, & McHale, 2015).

Our study was also limited in that the research design is one-time correlational. Based on self-efficacy models (Bandura, 1997, 2002), we focused on main and interactive effects of acculturation conflict and cultural PSE predicting perceived general competence, but alternative models (e.g., with perceived parenting competence predicting PSE) could exist. In a review of the parenting literature, Jones and Prinz (2005) described support for PSE as a predictor, outcome, as well as a mediator in development. Moreover, theory suggests and research shows that links between PSE beliefs, general parenting attitudes, including perceived competence, and parent and child outcomes could be bidirectional (Glatz & Buchanan, 2015a). Hence, the use of multi-wave data could help to illuminate these developmental processes. Longitudinal data could also address whether the association between acculturation conflict and parents' perceived general competence reflects a temporary phenomenon or one that is more long-term.

Another important direction for future research is to include data on parenting behaviors. Parents who feel that their behaviors will have positive effects on their children will likely engage in more positive and promotive parenting strategies compared to parents who feel ineffectual in influencing their children's lives (Ardelt & Eccles, 2001; Bandura, 2002). Indeed, prior research has shown that PSE, assessed at a general level, longitudinally predicts positive parenting behaviors among parents of adolescents in the domains of monitoring, discipline, and promotive parenting (Dumka et al., 2010; Glatz & Buchanan, 2015a). However, direct links between our task-specific measure of cultural PSE and parenting behaviors have yet to be empirically tested.

Children's perceptions and outcomes are crucial to consider as well. Our results contrast with some prior work showing that acculturation conflict does not necessarily lead to poor outcomes (e.g., Lau et al., 2005; Vega et al., 1996), but it is possible that nuances in the impact of such conflict could be due to parent versus child report. In addition, given that self-efficacy presumably leads to the implementation and achievement of the goals and tasks in question (Bandura, 1997), it would be important to determine whether parents' cultural PSE, particularly with regard to heritage messages, actually produces their desired outcome of influencing and establishing a strong sense of ethnic identity in their children. Similarly, do parents' efficacy beliefs in promoting biculturalism relate to children's bicultural identification? In light of the importance of ethnic identity and biculturalism in promoting child and adolescent well-being (Caughy et al., 2002; Smokowski et al., 2008), future work should expand our understanding of acculturation conflict, cultural PSE, and general competence and consider how these factors directly or indirectly affect children's psychological and social well-being and family functioning as targets for intervention and potential change (Stein & Guzman, 2015).

Indeed, the results of our study suggest that acculturation conflict and efficacy related to cultural socialization represent critical sources of stress and fortitude. Further developing

theoretical models and empirical foundations could help build our understanding of these key findings, move the field forward, and increase the recognition of precise ways in which parenting is influenced by cultural background, values, and context.

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Table 1

Demographic Breakdown (%) by Ethnic Group

	Latino/a parents (<i>n</i> = 153)	Asian parents (<i>n</i> = 58)	Total (<i>N</i> = 211)
	%	%	%
Parents' sex (mothers)	29	52	35
Children's sex (girls)	40	48	42
Born in the U.S.	86	55	78
Parents' education			
Less than high school	1	2	2
High school only	19	5	15
Some college or vocational education	21	17	20
College degree	40	41	40
Graduate or professional degree	19	35	23
Family income			
Less than \$20,000	6	2	5
\$20,000-\$37,999	18	7	15
\$38,000-61,999	31	17	28
\$62,000-\$101,000	28	41	31
Over \$101,000	17	33	21
Child's grade			
Grade 6	9	19	11
Grade 7	21	12	19
Grade 8	15	19	16
Grade 9	7	10	8
Grade 10	22	16	20
Grade 11	6	10	7
Grade 12	20	14	19

Table 2

Bivariate Correlations, Means (M), and Standard Deviations (SD) among All Study Variables by Ethnic Group

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Latino/a parents (<i>n</i> = 153)		Asian parents (<i>n</i> = 58)	
									<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
1. Acc. Conflict	.	.11	.25	.21	-.39**	-.05	-.07	-.11	2.83	1.04	2.62	1.02
2. Heritage PSE	.18*	.	.58***	.32*	.10	-.06	.07	.01	7.16 ^a	1.66	6.58 ^a	1.93
3. Bicultural PSE	.15	.81***	.	.69***	-.10	-.25	-.18	-.10	7.33	1.72	6.97	1.39
4. American PSE	.02	.62***	.62***	.	.01	-.19	-.10	-.03	7.56 ^b	1.49	6.98 ^b	1.63
5. Competence	-.31***	.30***	.35***	.36***	.	.16	.00	.17	3.66	0.61	3.61	0.58
6. Family income	-.00	.11	-.02	.00	.18*	.	.14	.06	-	-	-	-
7. Born in the U.S.	-.14	-.11	-.03	-.06	-.11	-.02	.	.01	-	-	-	-
8. Child's grade	.08	-.19*	-.28**	-.22**	-.10	.06	.04	.	-	-	-	-

Note. Correlations above the diagonal are for Asian American parents (*n* = 58) and below the diagonal are for Latino/a parents (*n* =

153). Acc. Conflict = acculturation conflict. PSE = Parenting Self-Efficacy. Competence = parents' perceived general competence.

Born in the U.S.: 1 = lived entire life in the U.S., 2 = born in another country than the U.S. Means with the same subscripts differ significantly from each other at $p < .05$.

Table 3

Results Using Study Variables to Predict Parents' Perceptions of Parenting Competence

Predictor	Latino/a parents (<i>n</i> = 153)				Asian American parents (<i>n</i> = 58)			
	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i>	β	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i>	β
Model 1								
Acculturation conflict	-0.25	0.04	<.001	-.43	-0.25	0.04	<.001	-.44
Heritage PSE	0.13 ^a	0.03	<.001	.36	0.04 ^a	0.04	.227	.15
Heritage PSE*conflict	0.03	0.03	.338	.07	0.07	0.03	.027	.26
Family income	0.07	0.03	.039	.13	0.07	0.03	.039	.11
Born in the U.S.	-0.16	0.09	.086	-.09	-0.16	0.09	.086	-.14
Child's grade	0.01	0.02	.702	.02	0.01	0.02	.702	.03
Model 2								
Acculturation conflict	-0.24	0.04	<.001	-.42	-0.24	0.04	<.001	-.41
Bicultural PSE	0.16 ^b	0.03	<.001	.43	0.01 ^b	0.05	.812	.03
Bicultural PSE* conflict	0.04	0.03	.117	.11	0.02	0.05	.330	.04
Family income	0.10	0.03	.003	.18	0.10	0.03	.003	.16
Born in the U.S.	-0.17	0.09	.068	-.10	-0.17	0.09	.068	-.14
Child's grade	0.02	0.02	.410	.05	0.02	0.02	.823	.06
Model 3								
Acculturation conflict	-0.22	0.04	<.001	-.38	-0.22	0.04	<.001	-.36
American PSE	0.15 ^c	0.03	<.001	.37	0.04 ^c	0.04	.342	.12
American PSE*conflict	0.02	0.03	.485	.04	0.05	0.04	.290	.13
Family income	0.10	0.03	.003	.18	0.10	0.03	.003	.16
Born in the U.S.	-0.16	0.09	.080	-.09	-0.16	0.09	.080	-.14
Child's grade	0.01	0.02	.452	.03	0.01	0.02	.452	.03

Note. PSE = parenting self-efficacy. Born in the U.S., 1 = lived entire life in the U.S., 2 = born in another country than the U.S. Estimates with the same subscripts differ significantly from each other at $p < .05$.

Figure 1. Conceptual and analytical model examining predictors of perceived general parenting competence.

Figure 2. Illustration of the significant interaction between acculturation conflict and cultural heritage PSE as a predictor of perceived general parenting competence among Asian American parents. The simple slope set at 1 *SD* below the mean on the cultural heritage PSE variable ($b = -0.41$, $SE = 0.10$, $p < .000$) and 1 *SD* above the mean on the cultural heritage PSE variable ($b = -0.14$, $SE = 0.08$, $p = .058$) for Asian American parents ($n = 58$).