ABSTRACT
LATINO FAMILY MENTAL HEALTH: THE ROLE OF ACCULTURATION DIFFERENCES AND ACCULTURATION CONFLICT ON ADOLESCENT AND PARENTAL OUTCOMES

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In order to help address the mental health disparities that exist for Latino families in the U.S., the current study sought to examine the acculturation-mental health link within the context of the Latino family and to identify potential mechanisms for intervention to alleviate mental health problems in this population. Specifically, our goal was to examine how parent-adolescent acculturation differences were related to mental health in Latino adolescents and their parents and to understand the role of acculturation conflict and family functioning within the Latino family. Participants included 84 adolescent-parent dyads recruited through bilingual middle schools. We found partial support for our hypothesis that family functioning mediates the relationship between acculturation differences and mental health outcomes for Latino parents. Additionally, we found partial support for our moderated mediation hypothesis; specifically, a significant conditional indirect effect was found for Latino cognitive acculturation differences on adolescent externalizing problems via family functioning at high levels of acculturation conflict. Exploratory analyses also indicated that acculturation conflict moderates the relationship between family functioning and internalizing and externalizing problems for Latino adolescents. Results highlight the importance of understanding acculturation within the context of the Latino family, as findings differed for adolescents and their parents. Additionally, findings suggest that differences in acculturation may not always be problematic and their impact likely depends on how families interpret such differences.