

Parental Perspectives on Parent–Child Conflict and Acculturation in Iranian Immigrants in California

The Family Journal: Counseling and Therapy for Couples and Families
2018, Vol. 26(1) 110–118
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DOI: 10.1177/1066480718754770
journals.sagepub.com/home/tfj



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Abstract

Iranians have settled in a number of areas in the United States, especially Southern California and Texas, and experience substantial prejudice as a result of perceptions of their religion and national origin. This study explored the relationship between Iranian immigrant parents' acculturation and the level of conflict they experience with their U.S.-born children. A survey was used to collect data from a sample of 100 first-generation Iranian immigrant parents living in Orange County, CA, with children aged 11–22 years. Parent-acculturation levels were expected to predict parent–child conflicts (PCCs) resulting from potential acculturation gaps between children and parents. Results demonstrated a moderate positive relationship between Iranian cultural involvement and PCC and a weak negative relationship between American cultural involvement and PCC. The effects of various demographic variables were also considered. Results show higher PCC levels among lower income families, suggesting a need for support from schools, counselors, or other institutions.

Keywords

parent-child conflict, Iran, immigrant, acculturation, California

The United States is home to immigrants from all over the world. Iranians, like other immigrant groups, bring the culture and values of their country of origin to the United States (Emami, 2014). Raised in another culture, Iranian immigrants have unique views and concerns on a number of issues relating to political, moral, and social life in the United States (Mobasher, 2012). Navigating between the two cultures can be difficult for some immigrants, and these difficulties are evident when first-generation immigrant parents interact with their U.S.-born children, contributing to family conflict (Mobasher, 2012; Mostofi, 2003).

Research to date has mainly focused on the opinions of second-generation Iranian immigrants on the nature of parent–child conflicts (PCC; Elia, 2002; Janan, 2012; Zandi, 2012). The present study focused on first-generation Iranian immigrant parents' experiences to gain further understanding of the relationship between acculturation, PCC, and acculturation conflicts within Iranian immigrant families. In addition, the role of demographic variables (socioeconomic status, years of U.S. residency, education, parent's age during immigration, and religion) was considered as potential moderators in the relationships between acculturation, acculturation conflicts, and PCC.

Greater knowledge of the relationship between first-generation Iranian parents' acculturation and the conflicts they experience with their children will benefit Iranian families and the individuals and institutions that support them

(e.g., teachers, schools, and counselors). In particular, this knowledge can support families with understanding the factors that are associated with PCC, potentially reducing conflict through family counseling and other educational interventions.

Iranian Immigrants in the United States

There have been three distinct waves of Iranian immigration to the United States (Jalali, 1996). These took place during the 1950s, 1970s, and directly after the Iranian Revolution in 1979 (Bozorgmehr, 1998; Bozorgmehr & Douglas, 2011). Like other immigrant groups, Iranians are not homogeneous, differing in ethnicity, religion, culture (Bozorgmehr, 1998), and socioeconomic status (Mobasher, 2012). The four major Iranian ethnoreligious identities are Muslim, Christian American, Baha'i, and Jewish (Bozorgmehr, 1998; Mobasher, 2012). Differences between Iranian and American culture include language and

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family structure. For example, Iranian culture emphasizes a hierarchical and patriarchal family structure (Hanassab & Tidwell, 1996), whereas U.S. culture emphasizes individuality and gender equality (Mobasher, 2012). As immigrant Iranians reside in the United States, they consciously or unconsciously adopt or reject aspects of American culture, sometimes forming a dual or hybrid identity (Jaffarzad, 2007; Mahmoudizad, 2007; Rountree, 2007). In addition, they must make choices about the use of their native language (Persian or Farsi) versus English in their homes (Hoffman, 1989; Mobasher, 2012).

According to Berry and Sabatier (2011), the word acculturation means moving toward a (new) culture. This transition occurs when immigrants begin to adopt a new language or dialect, new day-to-day routines, and new values. Acculturation is a source of anxiety that immigrants face in day-to-day life (Berry & Sabatier, 2011). Early assimilation theories stated that adjustment to a new culture is progressive and that every element that distinguishes a person from the mainstream culture, such as language, ethics, behaviors, and eating habits, is eventually stripped away and supplanted by the mainstream norms of the new culture (Gordon, 1964). Park (1939) suggested a complete transition might not occur for first-generation immigrants but is likely for the second- or third-generation born and raised in the host society.

Building on Park's assimilation theory, Gordon (1964) believed that assimilation is based on the formation of relationships between people of both cultures (Mobasher, 2012). He formulated seven subprocesses to explain the progression, but the formation of group relations between immigrants and hosts was seen as primary (e.g., intermarriage). Researchers from the University of Chicago found that conflicts between immigrants and members of the host culture are provisional and inescapable, but they must happen in order to experience thorough assimilation (Mobasher, 2012). More recently, traditional assimilation theory has been rejected in favor of more complex explanations of acculturation (Schwartz, Unger, Zamboanga, & Szapocznik, 2010) recognizing that immigrants may adopt the host culture while retaining aspects of their heritage culture (Berry & Sabatier, 2011).

According to Berry's (1999) theory, two issues surface in culturally plural societies (societies where different cultures or ethnic groups make up the population). The first centers on which cultural characteristics from their homeland's culture an immigrant will keep or let go of, and the second choice involves which characteristics of the host culture to adopt or reject (Berry, 1999). Berry suggests that the outcome of immigrants' transition is either assimilation, separation, integration, or marginalization, depending on the degree to which immigrants adopt or reject their heritage versus the host culture. However, the validity of categorizing immigrants into these four groups has been questioned, and the concept of marginalization has been challenged as a possible outcome because it suggests individuals reject both the host and heritage culture (Schwartz et al., 2010). Berry's integration or bicultural approach (adopting the host and retaining the heritage culture) is associated with immigrants' best psychological adjustment

(Schwartz et al., 2010; Szapocznik, Kurtines, & Fernandez, 1980). More recent approaches, such as segmented assimilation and transnationalism, suggest that immigrant families such as those who migrate from Iran to the United States follow a more complex and selective path toward becoming members of their new host cultures, retaining connections to their Iranian culture to varying degrees (Mobasher, 2012).

Different acculturation outcomes become evident when immigrant parents and children are exposed to and adopt the host culture. These differences and the modifications in behavior that arise are referred to as acculturation gaps or disparities (S. Lee, Sobal, & Frongillo, 2000), which result in tensions between family members of the different generations. Smokowski, Rose, and Bacallao (2008) further define acculturation conflicts as a related concept stating, "Acculturation conflicts are experienced when messages from the culture of origin and host cultures [become] difficult to reconcile" (p. 295). Second-generation Iranians, born and raised in the United States, may have difficulty forming a sense of belonging to their parents' heritage culture and homeland (Mobasher, 2012; Tasuji, 2007). Acculturation gaps often revolve around religious beliefs, culture, and views on the power of government, progress, and development (Vasilescu, 2000; Williams & Berry, 1991). Various studies have focused on acculturation gaps for Iranians (Bozorgmehr, 1998; Carliner, 2000; Ghaffarian, 1998; Hanassab, 1991; Hoffman, 1989; Mobasher, 2006, 2012). Acculturation conflicts reflect the inner conflicts immigrant parents or children experience in attempting to be loyal to both cultures, while immigrant gaps reflect the tensions between different generations over issues of acculturation.

Zandi (2012) examined intergenerational acculturation gaps from the perspective of second-generation Iranian Americans. The results of his study indicate that participants with smaller intergenerational acculturation gaps have less family conflict. Elia (2002) focused on the relationship between depression and family conflict and how young Iranian adult females show slightly higher depression rates compared to males due to greater tension and conflict they have with their family. An earlier study done by Shahideh (1997) found that Iranian immigrant families experience significantly greater intergenerational conflict with their children than American parents. She concludes that tensions between Iranian parents and their American-born children increase when parents insist on teaching their Iranian values to their children. Shadideh (1997) found a correlation between the age of immigrant parents and their level of acculturation. She explained that the younger the parents' age at the time of their immigration, the less they face intergenerational conflict with their children. She reports a similar correlation between the parents' education levels and conflict levels with their adolescent children, suggesting more educated parents have less conflict with their children. Collectively, these studies suggest the level of involvement in heritage and host cultures contributes to PCC levels in Iranian immigrant families, especially when there are gaps in the acculturation levels of parents and children.

Iranian Immigrants and National Identity

Iran is composed of many ethnic and religious groups including Persians, Shi'a Muslims, Jews, Baha'is, Christians, Turks, Kurds, and Lurs. Mobasher's (2006) study on cultural trauma and ethnic identity attempted to explain the causes of "ethnic switching," subsequent veiling of national and religious identity, loss of ethnic or national pride, and the emergence of dual identities among Iranians. He argues that the 1979 Iranian hostage crisis, coupled with the disenchantment of most Iranians with the revolutionary policies of the Islamic Republic of Iran, caused an identity crisis, identity transformation, and loss or veiling of religious identity among Iranians. The national identity debate between the non-Islamic and Islamic Persianists, the unique transformation of the Iranian ethnic identity, and the emergence of Persian, Persian American, and Iranian American identities among Iranians in the United States has been a response to a double cultural trauma in both the home society (changes in Iran) and the host society (negative image of Iran and other Muslim nations).

Mobasher (2006) also argues that the continuation of negative images of Iran and equating Islam with fundamentalism, extremism, and terrorism by American mainstream media plays a central role in the construction of new ethnic identities among Iranians in exile. Mobasher (2006, 2012) adds that members of the exiled community identify themselves as Iranian, Persian, Persian American, Iranian American, and American-Iranian, depending on the situation and the audience. Iranian nationalists are proud to be affiliated with the Persian culture and heritage but are ashamed and embarrassed to be identified with the Iranian national government. He adds that fear of the negative reactions by anti-Khomeini critics (religious and political leader during the 1970s and 1980s, including during the Iranian revolution) has marginalized and pushed practicing Muslims into the periphery of the Iranian exile community, creating a religious and secular Iranian community. As Mobasher (2006) states, the ethnic identity of Iranians in exile appears to be fluid and permeable, revealing the contextual, situational, and socially constructed nature of ethnic identity (Barth, 1966; Nagel, 1994). Iranians' religious identity in exile seems to be going through a major transformation. Many more Iranians, especially the anti-Khomeini critics, have become resentful of Islamic teachings and faith (Bozorgmehr, 1998; Mobasher, 2006).

Bozorgmehr (1998) adds that Iranians who were part of the religious minority in Iran (Jewish Iranians and Armenian Iranians) maintained their ethnic identities after migrating to the United States to a higher degree than did Iranians from the religious majority (Islamic Iranians). Unlike religious minorities in Iran who had a well-developed ethnicity prior to emigration, Muslims lacked a distinct ethnic identity in Iran because they were in the majority (Bozorgmehr, 1997). Therefore, some loss of ethnicity among Muslim-Iranians was inevitable. In the study by Sabagh and Bozorgmehr (1994), it was found that the secularism of Iranian Muslims in Los Angeles is attributable to their urban origin, high social class, exile status,

and secularism in Iran before migration. Mobasher (2012) finds that many Iranians in Texas are secular and share some of the selective secular traits identified by Sabagh and Bozorgmehr (1994). At the same time, a greater number of Iranians in Texas tend to be mildly to very religious (Mobasher, 2012).

First-generation Iranian immigrant parents face considerable challenges in negotiating between the culture and identity of their nation of origin and the host country. This adds to the hardships of parenting, creating additional opportunities for PCC with adolescents seeking to fit into American culture but also honor their parents' social and religious identity. Iranian American parents, therefore, constitute an important group for research due to the contested nature of their Iranian identity, which adds to the gap between the host and heritage cultures that parents must navigate.

Socioeconomic Status and Acculturation

Socioeconomic status plays an important role in immigrant acculturation. Studies show an association between levels of income and acculturation (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Stepick, Stepick, Eugene, Teed, & Labissiere, 2001). Socioeconomic status allows wealthy families to insulate themselves from the surrounding culture or ensure access to resources needed to smooth acculturation (Stepick et al., 2001). In contrast, immigrant parents who do not speak English, have low-paying jobs, and, have low education levels experience the opposite, adding to their acculturation challenges. These challenges include higher levels of conflict with their offspring (Farver, Xu, Bhadha, Narang, & Lieber, 2007; Flores, 2015; G. S. Ho, 2005; J. 2010; Moon, 2008; Tardif & Geva, 2006). Socioeconomic status is also a general contributor to family conflict (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Stepick et al., 2001). Differences between high- and low-income families were therefore anticipated in PCC levels for the present study on Iranian families.

PCC

The roots, development, and experience of conflict in nurturing relationships between family members are common themes in research (Berger, 2011; Maccoby, 1992), especially among immigrant parents and children (Foner & Kasinitz, 2007). In this study, special attention was given to PCC during adolescence. Power struggles and challenges often occur during this maturation stage when parents and children diverge on values and preferences (Berger, 2011). Less commonly, conflicts occur when individuals do not value each other or miscommunicate (Ghazarian, Supple, & Plunkett, 2008; Weisner, 2001). Whether conflict is accepted as a form of communication to resolve a problem also contributes to how family members treat each other (Hosseiny, 2007).

According to Berger (2011), conflicts emerge from the differing interactions, activities, and social environments children and their parents' experience. For Iranian immigrant parents and their U.S.-born children, conflicts might occur due to differing expectations between the parents' Iranian collectivist

culture and the United States' individualist culture (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010) to which the child is exposed through schooling, contact with other children, television, and the media. Differences in the ethnic identities of first and second-generation immigrants cause friction in Iranian families (Mobasher, 2012). Immigrant families from countries such as Mexico, Korea, and China face many similar challenges with their children during the process of acculturation (Choi, He, & Harachi, 2008; Pasch et al., 2006; Varela et al., 2004). Many immigrant parents perceive a loss in power and confidence during the process of adjusting to a new culture (Choi et al., 2008) and may attempt to choose one culture or try to negotiate between the two (Foner & Kasinitz, 2007; Jalali, 1996). For example, Korean American adolescents and young adults experience conflicts with their parents because of acculturation differences, ethnic identity concerns, and family roles that add to their stress and family conflict levels (C. Kim, Laroche, & Tomiuk, 2004; Min, 2006; Moon, Wolf, & Robinson, 2001).

PCC is also driven by tensions between parentally driven socialization and the socialization children receive from the host culture (Zandi, 2012). Various studies conducted on European immigrant groups and post-1965 immigrant groups highlight how increased PCC is related to adjusting to a new culture (Berrol, 1995; Foner, 1997; Gordon, 1964; Min, 1998; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Rumbaut, 1997; Wolf, 2002; Zhou & Bankston, 1998). Intergenerational conflicts are not only found in immigrant homes. Erikson (1968) specified that adolescents' conflict with family takes place when adolescents are going through identity crises and cannot fit into their surrounding social context while fulfilling their parents' expectations. In other words, when parents and adolescents are influenced by different cultures (Iranian vs. American), conflict may ensue or increase.

Acculturation disparity has been identified as an important factor in determining the quality of mother-adolescent relationships (S. Y. Kim, Chen, Li, Huang, & Moon, 2009; Lim, Yeh, Liang, Lau, & McCabe, 2009). Tardif and Geva's (2006) study found that elevated levels of conflict were reported in Chinese Canadian families with adolescents who reported high levels of acculturation and mothers who reported low levels of acculturation. Mothers who had high levels of acculturation disparity have more PCCs than mothers who had low acculturation disparity (Buchanan, 2001; Fuligni, 1998). Iranian parent-adolescent dyads might be expected to experience similar levels of PCCs to those of Chinese Canadian dyads due to levels of acculturation disparity between the first and second generation of immigrants.

Iranian Immigrants in Orange County

This study focused on families in Orange County, CA. Census data from 2011 to 2015 show California (208,459) followed by Texas (37,809) having the largest number of Iranians (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015). Within California, Los Angeles County (88,209) and Orange County (36,037) have the greatest Iranian settlements. After the first Iranian migration period in the

1950s, more than half of the Iranians who were part of the first wave of migration settled in California, which has a Mediterranean climate similar to that of their homeland (Casacchia, 2013). Over time, the quality of life and business opportunities in Orange County motivated many Iranian immigrants to move there. Immigrants are often attracted to areas where they have family contacts or where they know they will find others similar to them (Nourian, 2012; Public Affairs Alliance of Iranian Americans, 2014). Mobasher (2012) describes the history of Iranians moving to Texas for similar reasons. At a time when big cities like Los Angeles were struggling with rising crime, many believed that Orange County offered their children better schools and a safer environment in which to live (Casacchia, 2013). The immigrants eventually started families, and many invited other family members to join them.

Summary

This study aimed to explore the relationship between Iranian parents' acculturation, PCC, and acculturation conflicts. Previous studies have explored this issue from the child's rather than the parent's perspective (Elia, 2002; Janan, 2012; Zandi, 2012). Demographic variables were also considered as moderators in the relationships between acculturation, PCC, and acculturation conflicts.

Method

Sample and Data Collection Procedures

One hundred first-generation Iranian immigrant parents living in Orange County, CA, with children between 11 and 22 years of age born in the United States participated in this survey. Participants were recruited using purposive and snowball sampling (Creswell, 2009; Ray, 2012). Personal contacts in the Iranian American Orange County community were invited to complete the survey or share the invitation with other parents in the region. Announcements were also made through the local Iranian American community center, Iranian-owned grocery stores, Iranian associations, and local Iranian media (e.g., flyers). After data cleansing (removing substantially incomplete responses) and removal of five outliers, the final sample size was 90. Sample demographics are presented in Table 1.

Measures

Data was collected from the parents using three instruments: (a) the 20-item Conflict Behavior Questionnaire (Robin & Foster, 1989) was used to measure PCC, (b) the 4-item Acculturation Conflict Scale (Vega & Gil, 1998) was used to measure the difficulties reconciling host and heritage cultures, and (c) Szapocznik, Kurtines, and Fernandez's (1980) 33-item Bicultural Involvement Questionnaire (BIQ) was used to measure Iranian cultural involvement (ICI) and American cultural involvement (ACI), providing estimates of American versus Iranian acculturation. Previous studies with the BIQ report internal consistency coefficients of .87 and above. The BIQ was modified

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of the Sample.

Age (years)	18–30 Years (3.3%)
	31–40 Years (11.1%)
	41–50 Years (46.7%)
	51–60 Years (32.2%)
	Over 60 Years (6.7%)
Gender	Female (36.7%)
	Male (62.2%)
Education	High school (4.4%)
	Postsecondary education (32.2%)
	Completed graduate degree (43.3%)
	Completed postgraduate degree (20%)
Household income	Less than \$24,999 (2.2%)
	\$25,000–\$49,999 (6.7%)
	\$50,000–\$74,999 (4.4%)
	\$75,000–\$99,999 (15.6%)
	\$100,000–\$149,999 (26.7%)
	\$150,000 or more (42.2%)
Age during immigration	Under 18 years (12%)
	18–30 Years (79%)
	31–40 Years (6%)
	41–50 Years (3%)
Number of years lived in the United States	1–5 Years (1.1%)
	6–10 Years (3.3%)
	More than 10 years (95.6%)
Primary language in the home	Farsi (17.8%)
	English (23.3%)
	Farsi and English (58.9%)
Religious orientation	Muslim (68.9%)
	Armenian Christians (1.1%)
	Zoroastrian (1.1%)
	Christian (4.4%)
	Other (21.1%)

Note. No response was received for isolated questions causing percentages to total to less than 100%.

Table 2. Correlation Matrix of Variables.

Variable	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	α	1	2	3	4
1. American cultural involvement	90	76.56	10.39	.87	—			
2. Iranian cultural involvement	90	73.16	8.82	.80	-.46**	—		
3. Parent–child conflict	90	4.41	4.35	.87	-.13	.30**	—	
4. Acculturation conflicts	90	9.48	3.44	.77	-.30**	.29**	.22*	—

Note. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *SD* = standard deviation.

from its original focus on Hispanic and American cultural involvement to measure ICI and ACI, which resulted in Cronbach α s of .80 and .87 for the ICI and ACI subscales. Descriptive statistics and Cronbach α coefficients for the scales are reported in Table 2. All coefficients exceeded Nunnally's (1978) recommended level of .70.

Statistical Analysis

Strength and direction of relationships between the variables were analyzed using Pearson's correlation coefficients (interval data) or Spearman's ρ (ordinal data). Independent sample *t* tests were used to compare levels of PCC, ICI, ACI, and acculturation conflicts between demographic groups (e.g., high- and low-income families). A paired sample *t* test was used to compare parents' mean ICI and ACI levels.

Results

As part of the initial analysis of the data, parents' ACI ($M = 76.56$, standard deviation [*SD*] = 10.39) and ICI ($M = 73.16$, $SD = 8.82$) levels were also compared to identify whether there was significant difference in their involvement in the two cultures. A paired samples *t* test ($t = 1.86$, $p > .05$) suggested the difference was not significant.

Pearson correlation coefficients between the study variables are presented in Table 2. Levels of ICI were moderately correlated with PCC (significant), while ACI had a weak negative relationship with PCC (not significant). Acculturation conflicts were moderately and significantly correlated to ICI (positive correlation) and ACI (negative correlation).

High levels of homogeneity in the sample's religion, age at immigration, and length of residency (see Table 1) prevented further analysis comparing subgroups on the study variables or controlling for these variables in relationships. Income and education levels were included in further analyses. A *t* test was completed comparing PCC for those above ($n = 38$) and below ($n = 50$) the US \$150,000 income levels ($t = -2.92$, $p < .01$), with the cutoff of \$150,000 selected to allow approximately equal group sizes. Parents with higher household income reported significantly less PCC ($M = 2.95$, $SD = 3.34$) than lower income parents ($M = 5.60$, $SD = 4.76$). *t* Tests for ICI, ACI, and acculturation conflicts did not show any significant differences between higher and lower income households. Comparisons between those with higher ($n = 57$) and lower education levels ($n = 33$), using the cutoff of a graduate or postgraduate degree, did not reveal any significant differences in ACI, ICI, PCC, or acculturation conflicts.

Average household income was measured with an ordinal scale allowing this variable to be correlated with ACI, ICI, PCC, and acculturation conflicts using Spearman's ρ . Average household income was weakly and significantly correlated with ACI ($r = .25$, $p < .05$) and ICI ($r = -.27$, $p < .05$) and uncorrelated with acculturation conflict ($r = -.10$, $p > .05$) but was moderately and negatively correlated with PCC ($r = -.40$, $p < .001$). As a means to controlling for the impact of income levels of the relationship between ICI and PCC, differences in the strength of the relationship between ICI and PCC for lower and higher income level groups were compared, but the difference was not significant (I. A. Lee & Preacher, 2013).

Discussion and Implications

Previous literature suggests that adapting to the host culture while holding onto one's heritage culture is a central contributor to conflict between Iranian immigrant parents and their children (Mobasher, 2012; Mostofi, 2003), although this has not been empirically tested from the parents' perspective. The relationships between immigrant parents and their children are affected by both parties' attempts to establish the roles they will play in each other's lives while living in an unfamiliar society (Farver, Narang, & Bhadha, 2002; Go & Le, 2005). Parents and children may be exposed to different acculturating influences (e.g., school vs. work) and respond differently to such influences, resulting in acculturation gaps within the family and contributing to intergenerational conflict. For U.S.-born children, they may lack the personal connection to Iran, creating tensions between their identification with U.S. and Iranian culture.

In the present study, ACI and ICI were used as indicators of the level of acculturation of parents, reflecting involvement with the host and heritage cultures. Comparison of the parents' ACI and ICI levels showed that mean levels of cultural involvement in American and Iranian culture were not significantly different for this sample. ACI and ICI levels were also not significantly different for higher and lower income parents. The lack of disparity may relate to the median residency period in the United States being more than 10 years. The restriction of the sample to a single region may also have resulted in less variance in acculturation levels.

ICI was significantly associated with greater levels of PCC for the whole sample, although this was a moderate relationship. In contrast to Smokowski et al.'s (2008) study with Latino families, ACI did not correlate significantly with PCC. This suggests that involvement in American culture (reflecting acculturation to the host culture for Iranian immigrants) is not a significant predictor of PCC, while involvement in Iranian culture did predict PCC. Approximately 9% of the variance in PCC could be explained by ICI. Parents who are more involved in their heritage Iranian culture are slightly more likely, therefore, to experience PCC. Counselors and other professionals supporting families are likely aware of this challenge for other immigrant groups, but the present study reaffirms this result. However, the moderate nature of the relationship suggests that the importance of ICI should not be overestimated and other factors common to many families (e.g., parenting style or communication) are likely to be more important.

Tiffin, Pearce, Kaplan, Fundudis, and Parker (2007) report inconsistent results across studies linking socioeconomic status to family functioning, depending on factors like how economic status is measured. Botha, Booyens, and Wouter (2017) apply ecological theory in linking socioeconomic status to family functioning stating, "According to the FSM [Family Stress Model], economic hardship (such as low SES [socioeconomic status]) increases economic pressures within the family, which in turn exacerbate stress and conflict, thereby negatively impacting family functioning" (p. 2). Wealthier families

(>\$150,000 household income) in the present study demonstrated a lower mean level of PCC. Stepick, Stepick, Eugene, Teed, and Labissiere (2001) notes that wealth can shield families from some of the stresses of acculturation. Mobasher (2012) refers to the potential ethnic ambience among co-ethnic professionals and self-employed business owners who can create ethnic enclaves that allow them to maintain their heritage culture. Within such economic ethnic enclaves, immigrants are employed by or employ others of their own ethnic group reducing exposure to the host culture (Light, Sabagh, Bozorgmehr, & Der-Martirosian, 1994). Lower income families may not have the same privileges. As Mobasher (2012) notes, immigrants in the United States may experience segmented assimilation where they join the middle class and experience upward mobility, join the urban working class leading to poverty and downward mobility, or through membership of the affluent class selectively acculturate determining which cultural values and practices to accept. In this study, the correlation between average household income and PCC was significant, moderate, and positive, supporting the notion that lower income families experience higher PCC. Education levels were not found to be differentiating factor in the study variables, suggesting that income is the more important consideration.

Acculturation conflicts, reflecting the experience of tensions between the host and heritage cultures, were weakly related to PCC explaining less 4.8% of the variance in PCC. S. Lee, Sobal, and Frongillo (2000) proposed the acculturation gap-distress hypothesis, stating that first-generation immigrants and their children have arguments due to differing values and preferences as well as different acculturation rates. The notion that those immigrant parents who experience difficulty adapting to American society, reflected in their levels of inner conflicts about acculturation, would have a greater chance of experiencing conflict with their children was weakly supported by this study's results.

The findings of the current study only reflect an exploration into understanding family conflict dynamics for Iranian immigrant first-generation parents. Counselors, researchers, educators, and Iranian immigrants could benefit from further examination of first-generation Iranian immigrants' conflict with their children, given the impact that conflict can have on the family unit and society. Future researchers should consider conducting one-on-one interviews in order to clarify the interaction of income levels and ICI, focusing on how families attribute conflicts to acculturation gaps versus financial concerns for high- and low-income families. In particular, exploring the specific challenges experienced for different income groups and the ways in which socioeconomic status is used to reduce PCC is encouraged. Future researchers could also include a parent's professional status and nature of employment (e.g., self-employment) to explore their effect on acculturation levels and the ability to shield the family from acculturation-related conflicts and subsequent effects on PCC. Comparing PCC levels between immigrant and nonimmigrant families within the same geographic region (ensuring similar

income levels) would also highlight whether Iranian families have different levels of conflict than nonimmigrant families, in a similar manner to Tardif and Geva's (2006) study. However, collecting data from multi regions might overcome the homogeneity of religion and income in the sample, allowing greater variance in the lower income groups.

Immigrants from every nation experience challenges related to immigration, however, Iranians present a unique case given historical tensions between Iran and the United States. This study found some support for the idea that acculturation was a predictor of PCC. ICI had a moderate relationship with PCC. Socioeconomic status was highlighted as a moderate predictor of PCC for Iranian immigrants. This has important implications for those who support immigrant families, reinforcing that lower income immigrant families may need additional support to reduce or prevent PCC. Counselor and educator awareness of the relationship between socioeconomic status and PCC might alert them to individual family needs. Equally, acculturation gaps may also be relevant to PCC levels, especially where a parent has high involvement with Iranian culture. Interventions might include increasing understanding of this dynamic and helping families to communicate about differences in acculturation and tensions between the host and heritage culture.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The author(s) received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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