

Can Family Cohesion Moderate Acculturative Stress and Depression?



Jingshuai Du, Yile (Tom) Su

Backgrounds

- The United States has a racially and ethnically **diverse population**.
- The **Asian American** population (17 million) in the United States is now increasing at a faster rate (46%) than any other ethnic group (Takeuchi, Alegría, Jackson, & Williams, 2007).
- Adapting to U.S. culture can be a **stressful and lonely process**, which can lead to feeling depressed.
- This study aims to test if **family cohesion** can moderate the associations between acculturative stress and depression among Asian Americans in the United States.

Concept Definition

- **Acculturative stress:** the tension or strain associated with the acquisition of a second-culture that may result in adverse physical or mental health effects (Rudmin, 2009).
- **Depression:** Depression is one of the most burdensome diseases in the world (costing \$34 billion a year in the U.S.), often impacting work, family, and social life.
- **Family cohesion:** the emotional bonding that family members have toward one another (Rivera et al., 2008).

Sample and Procedures

- National Latino and Asian American Study (**NLAAS**): A nationally representative population-based surveys of Latinos and Asian Americans conducted by the University of Michigan Survey Research Center in the United States from 2002 and 2003.
- In the current study, only **non-U.S. born Asian American participants** were used, including Chinese ($n = 475$), Vietnamese ($n = 502$), Filipino ($n = 349$), other Asian ethnicities (E.g., Japanese and Korean); ($n = 315$).



Measurements:

- **Depression:** World Mental Health Survey Initiative version of the World Health Organization Composite International Diagnostic Interview (WMH-CIDI)
- **Acculturative stress:** a 10 - item scale adapted from the Mexican American Prevalence and Services Survey (Vega, et al., 1986).
 - *“if living in the United States has limited their contact with family/friends.”*
- **Family Cohesion:** a 3-item subscale of the Family Cohesion Scale (Olson, 1989).
 - *“whether family members like to spend free time with each other.”*

Results: Logistic Regression

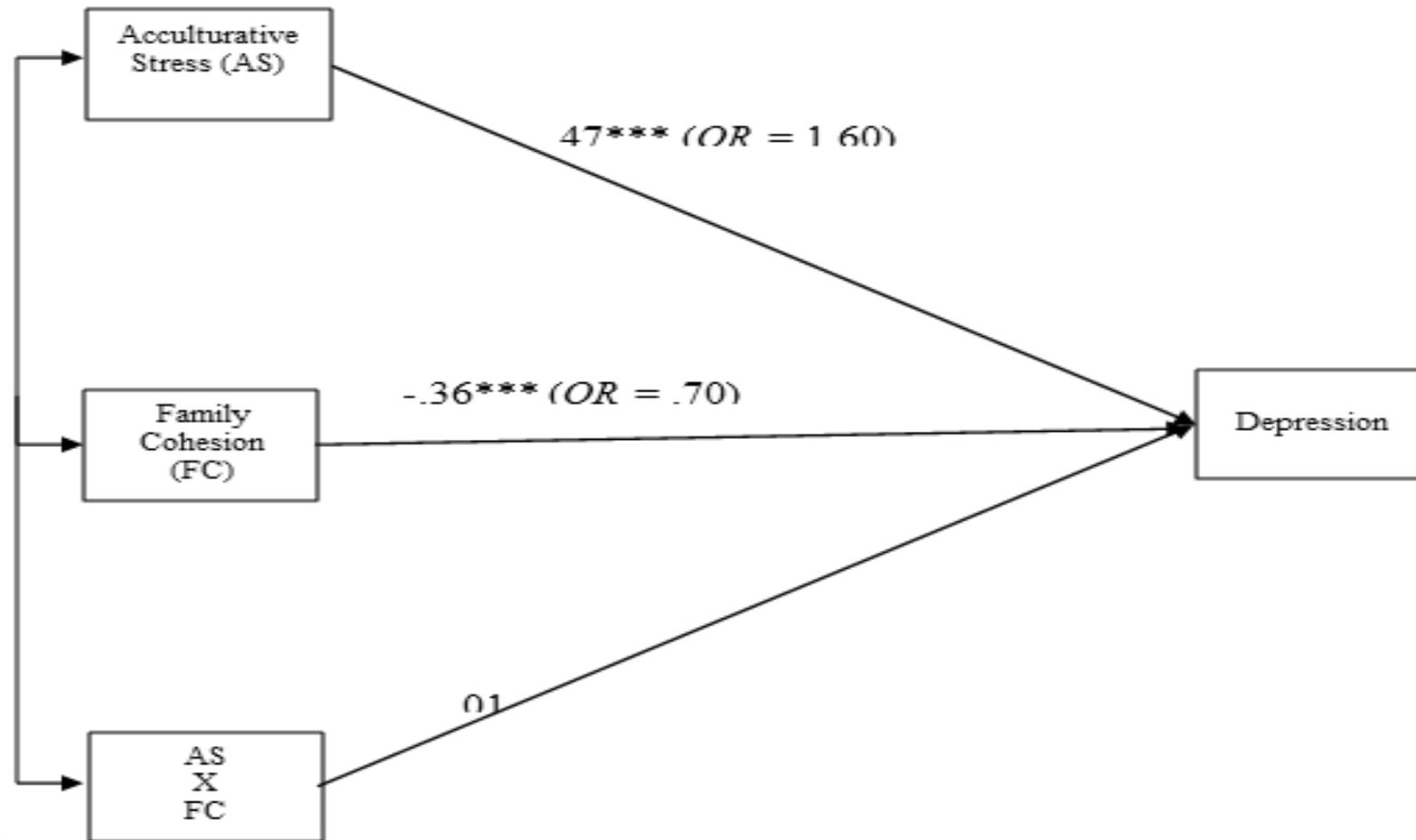


Figure 1. Acculturative Stress, Family Cohesion, and Depression Model.

* $p < .01$. ** $p < .05$, *** $p < .001$ (two-tailed).

Results

- The association between acculturative stress and depression was statistically significant ($b=.47$, $p<.001$, $OR=1.60$), and the association between family cohesion and depression was statistically significant ($b=-.36$, $p<.01$, $OR=.70$), while controlling for sex, age, years of education, household income, age at immigration, and years in the United States.
- The interaction term of family cohesion was not significantly associated with depression, and thus family cohesion did not moderate this association between acculturative stress and depression ($b=.01$, $p>.05$)

Discussions:

- The **moderation effect** was not found but there were still significant associations between acculturative stress, family cohesion and depression.
- People with clinical depression reported significantly lower level of family cohesion and higher level of acculturative stress.
- As a clinician, it is important to **access acculturative stress** and **explore family relationships** when working with Asian immigrants who experience depression.



Limitation:

- NLAAS was a **cross-sectional** study.
- The study did not include a non-immigrant control group since the acculturative stress scale was only assessed among **first-generation immigrants**.
- The prevalence of depression was measured in the past 12-month period and the **DSM-IV standard** has been updated since the study was conducted.

References

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