

The Vulnerability-Stress-Adaptation Model and Latino Adolescent Fathers*

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Latino Adolescents

- High rates of economic vulnerability
- May also struggle with acculturation mismatch with their partners
- Protected by the cultural value of *familismo*
 - Centers family
 - Family members provide emotional and material support

(Calzada, Tamis-LeMonda, & Yoshikawa, 2012; Murphy, Guzman, & Torres, 2014; Williams & Rueda, 2016)

Latino Adolescent Fatherhood

- Almost a quarter of all babies in the US are of Latino origin
- In 2015, approximately 230,000 children were born to adolescent parents
- Latinos adolescents had two times the birth rate of non-Hispanic Whites

(CDC, 2017; Murphy et al., 2014)

Vulnerability-Stress-Adaptation

- Model for understanding relationship stability
 - Vulnerability
Enduring personal characteristics
 - Stress
An acute event that causes strains in a relationship
 - Adaptation
Actions and decisions at both the individual and the couple level undertaken to cope and move forward from stressful events

(Karney & Bradbury, 1995)

Vulnerability-Stress-Adaptation

- The present study
 - Vulnerability
Low socioeconomic status
 - Stress
Unplanned adolescent pregnancy
 - Adaptation
Financial and educational goals

(CDC, 2017; Futris, Olmstead, Pasley, & Neilson, 2012; Kiselica & Kiselica, 2014 Lawrence, Rothman, Cobb, Rothman, & Bradbury, 2008; Lee, Fagan, & Chen, 2012)

Method

Procedures

- Part of a larger study on the relationship experiences of adolescent fathers
- Recruited from relationship education program from 5 high schools
- Approached individually by program facilitators
- Individual interviews
 - Length: $M = 43$ min; $Range = 13-95$ min

(Bermea & Toews, 2018)

Method

Sample

- $N = 11$
- Race: Latino = 10; Biracial = 1
- Age: $M = 17.73$ years; *Range* = 16-18 years
- Relationship Status: Together = 8; Separated = 3
- Child's Age: $M = 6.8$ months; *Range* = 1.5-13 months
 - 1 Partner's Pregnant
- All received government benefits

(Bermea & Toews, 2018)

Method

Analysis

- Thematic Analysis
 - Inductive preliminary coding
 - Deductive secondary coding based on VSA
 - Categorization of broad codes into smaller themes
 - Mapped themes along the original model

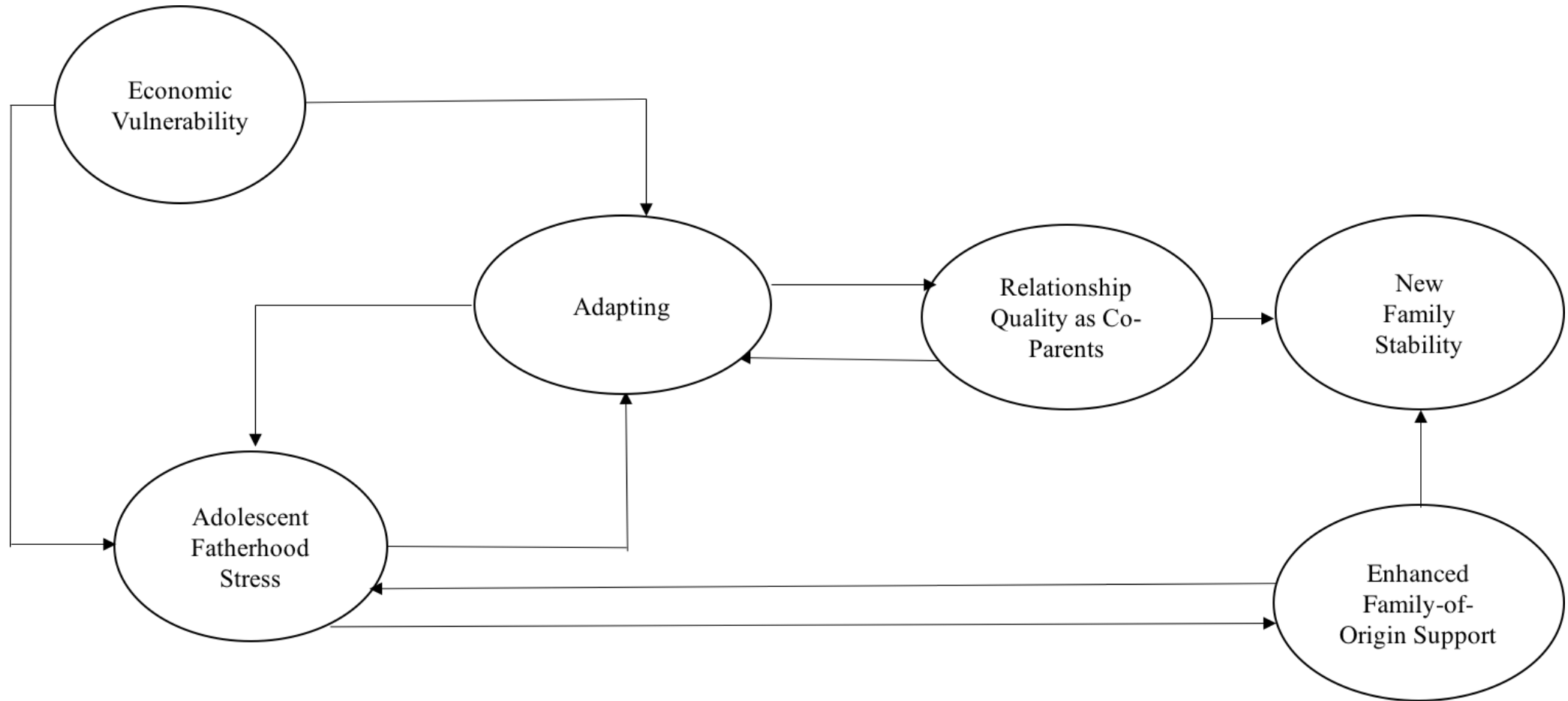
(Braun & Clarke, 2006; Creswell, 2014;
Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006)

Current Study

Research Question

How do economic vulnerabilities and stress in the form of fatherhood for Latino adolescents influence partner relationships and their families?

Findings



Findings

“I Need to Get a Job”: Economic Vulnerability

Low income conditions during childhood

*“I’m gonna make some money so I can put some, **help my mom put some dinner on the table**. And basically that’s what I did. Like, I made the money for dinner; my mom paid the bills.” -Beto*

Continuing low-income conditions that made parenting stressful

*“I need to get a job. And I’ve been trying to get a job. **I’d take any job.**” -
Efrain*

Findings

“I Got Out of Football, Started Working More”: Adapting

Developing financial goals to provide for their children

*“[My dad] was like, ‘well I told you to wrap your shit up.’ He was like, ‘you didn’t do it... so **you gotta be a man.**’ And I was already working so it was just, **I had to put more hours in.**” - Jacob*

*“**I supported her for so long** and even when she moved out of the house [after breaking up].” -Beto*

Findings

“Giving Our Child a Family”: Relationships Quality

Facilitating Adaptation

*“We found out she was pregnant... a couple months into her pregnancy and **we worked things out**. We talked a lot [about] being a family.”-Luis*

Hindering Adaptation

*“**[She’ll tell me] that she’ll leave** and take my daughter...**I just shut up** because I don’t want that. Yeah. I don’t react.”- Santiago*

Findings

“I Know She’s There for Me”: Family-of-Origin Support

Emotional Support

“The person I talk to [is] my aunt [the] most; [she’s] kinda like the mom role model. Even before she had kids, when she was like, eighteen, she graduated.”- David

Parental Support

“I’m leaving during 7th period to go get [my daughter], then I have to drop her off to my mom and then go to work. And then I’m a get her that morning”- Nico

Discussion

Model Development

- Qualitative adaptation
 - Accounts for contextual factors
 - Able to better understand internalized processes
- Population
 - Model tends to have studied adult relationships
 - Has not generally recognized adolescent parents

(Gilgun, 2012; Karney & Bradbury, 1995;
Williams & Rueda, 2016)

Discussion

Adaptation

- To adapt, fathers engaged in work to provide
 - Adolescent fathers who work are less likely to complete their education
 - Family may be a source of support to help them to do both (e.g., parental support)
 - Seeking work may be a source of stress within the dyad, hindering adaptation

(Futris et al., 2012; Mollborn, 2010)

Discussion

Interfamily Adaptation

- Adaptation is a bidirectional process the VSA model with a partner
 - We saw both adaptation and hindrance within couples
 - Our model extends dyadic adaptive processes through extended family inclusion
 - May be due to the influence of *familismo*
 - Two forms: emotional support, parental support
 - Can help to establish stability when the parental dyad is struggling

(Calzada et al., 2012; Karney & Bradbury, 1995)

Discussion

Familismo

- Extended family has not been acknowledged within this model
- Adding external individuals may help to provide a more thorough understanding of family stability
- Important when working with Latino families
- Family is an important source of support for adolescent parents
 - Extended family should be incorporated into the VSA model with adolescent fathers of other ethnic identities

(Calzada et al., 2012; Karney & Bradbury, 1995; Saleh & Hilton, 2011)

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