

Cross-Cultural Comparison of Caregiver Concerns and Resources for Children with Disabilities

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Introduction

- Disability: An impairment that limits one's ability to complete all of life's everyday tasks (Matt, 2014).
- This project was guided by the Sociocultural Theory of Development (García et al., 1999) and Vygotsky's Theory of Disabilities (García et al., 1999).
 - Previous research has demonstrated that one's experience with a disability is impacted by their gender, economic status, environment, and culture (Graf et al., 2007; WHO, 2011).
- A child with a disability is more likely to be fully dependent on a caregiver compared to typically developing peers (Katz et al., 2012; Smith et al., 2001; Van Der Mark et al., 2017).
 - Caregivers experience heightened stress and report feelings of burden, inadequacy, sadness and depression (Smith et al., 2001; Van Der Mark et al., 2017).
 - Main stressors: financial expenses, access to resources, and disability severity (Smith et al., 2001; Van Der Mark et al., 2017).
- The purpose of the current study was to investigate the experiences of caring for a child with a disability in a developed country (i.e., US) and a developing country (i.e., Mexico).

Methods

- Paper surveys were distributed through organizations that provide services for children with disabilities and their families.

Participants

- A total of 70 caregivers participated in the study:
 - 25 caregivers resided in southeastern US (88% mothers)
 - 45 caregivers resided in Yucatán, Mexico (84.4% mothers)

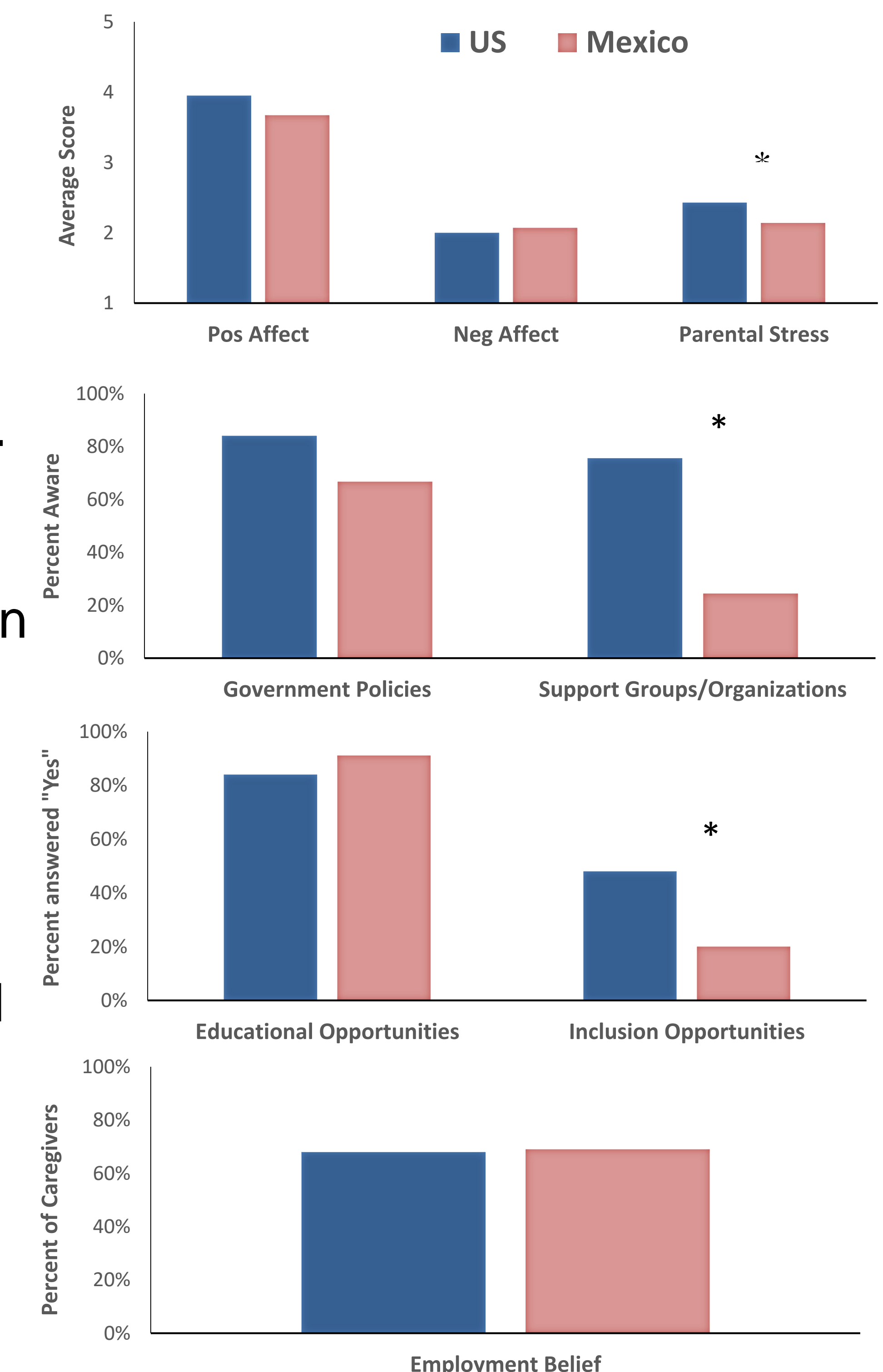
Measures

- Family demographics
- Resources: access to education, access to transportation, knowledge of policies and support organizations, beliefs about child's future employment
- Caregiver stress: Parental Stress Scale (Berry et al., 1995)
- Caregiver emotions: Positive and Negative Affect Scale (Watson et al., 1988)

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Results

- US caregivers reported significantly more stress, $t(61) = 2.06, p = .044$.
- US and Mexico caregivers did not differ in their awareness of government policies, $X^2(1) = 2.44, p = .118$, but Mexico caregivers were more satisfied with known government policies, $t(53) = -2.57, p = .013$.
- US caregivers were more aware of support groups/organizations, $X^2(1) = 22.97, p < .001$, and more US caregivers participated in support groups/organizations than Mexico caregivers, $X^2(1) = 18.88, p < .001$.
- US and Mexico caregivers did not differ in their perceptions of educational opportunities, $X^2(1) = .08, p = .781$.
- More US caregivers reported that their child attended an inclusive or regular education school/classroom, $X^2(1) = 7.32, p = .007$.
- US and Mexico caregivers did not differ in belief of whether their child will one day be employed, $X^2(1) = .012, p = .913$.



Discussion

- Several differences were noted in caregivers' perceptions of caring for their child with a disability:
 - US caregivers' increased stress may be due to the progressive expectations of American society (Van Der Mark et al., 2017).
 - Lack of available support groups or organizations in Mexico is likely a product of economic resources (WHO, 2011).
 - Timing of government policy development in Mexico could explain reduced reporting of inclusive educational opportunities and the increase in beliefs regarding future employment amongst Mexico caregivers (Garcia-Cedillo et al., 2014; Katz et al., 2010; Reich-Erdmann, 1999; Sandoval et al., 2017).
- The main limitation of this study was a small sample size. Future directions of the study should assess child's adaptive behavior as an additional variable.

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