

**THE ROLES OF ATTITUDINAL FAMILISM, ACCULTURATIVE STRESS, AND
DEPRESSIVE SYMPTOMS FOR SOUTH ASIAN COLLEGE STUDENTS**

A Dissertation

by

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ABSTRACT

South Asian college students are seeking mental health services more frequently and there are specific sociopolitical, historical, and cultural events that impact these students and their mental health. Given that many South Asian college students experience acculturative stress and depression as they navigate familial obligations, and as men and women may experience this differently, the current study seeks to explore how beliefs about familial obligations are related to acculturative stress and depression for South Asian college students. Using multigroup structural equation modeling, the four components of attitudinal familism (familial support, familial interconnectedness, familial honor, and subjugation of self for family) are examined individually to determine how each one impacts the relationship between acculturative stress and depression, for male and female South Asian college students. The author hypothesized that there would be a positive relationship between acculturative stress and depression, that each of the components of attitudinal familism will impact this relationship, and that the male and female groups will experience this impact differently. Results indicate that there is a significant, positive relationship between acculturative stress and depression for South Asian college students and that the familial honor component significantly impacts this relationship for both the male and female groups. Counseling implications of these results are discussed.

DEDICATION

To my family, friends, and community who have taught me the meaning of unconditional support, this work exists because of you. In particular, I dedicate this to my parents, Zain and Farhana Ali, my brother, Mateen Ali, my partner, Kris Seavers, and my Nana and Nani, Sharfuddin and Nafis Shah, for their unwavering love and confidence in me.

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LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

As universities strive to improve their diversity efforts and inclusion of minority students, South Asian college students are often misunderstood or overlooked. Although often viewed as a model minority that excels in school, South Asian (SA) college students tend to struggle with feeling included in the overarching university environment and report experiences of discrimination and racism (Samuel & Burney, 2003). These students are often first- or second-generation immigrants to the United States, and many may not have the benefit of their parents being familiar with the education system in the U.S. Although there is diversity within the South Asian population, there are also many shared cultural norms and values. Many people who immigrate from these countries place a high value on education, achievement, and family values (Bhattacharya & Schoppelrey, 2004). The majority of immigrants from these countries come to the United States to pursue the “American dream” and seek out opportunities that otherwise would not be available to them in their home countries (Bhattacharya & Schoppelrey, 2004). Consequently, South Asian college students often face enormous pressure from their parents to perform well in school and have highly successful careers, while also maintaining their cultural values and traditions (Bhattacharya & Schoppelrey, 2004). Cultural values dictate that South Asian college students maintain a close relationship, both physically and emotionally, to their parents; this can impact where students go to school and the types of relationships they form with their peers if their parents require them to stay at home (Bhattacharya & Schoppelrey, 2004; Schwartz et al., 2010). Furthermore, traditional South Asian families impress upon children values like obeying their parents, which may impact what students decide to study in college

(Kim, 2010). These familial expectations, along with the sociopolitical environment, have direct implications on SA college students' acculturative stress.

The sociopolitical climate in the United States, as well as historical Western influences on South Asian culture, impact South Asians' acculturative stress, which is the feelings of social rejection that occur when a person experiences pressure to maintain the customs and language of their heritage culture and adopt the customs and language of the host culture. The 9/11 attacks and the resulting racism and Islamophobia have impacted South Asians' experiences living in the United States and consequently, their acculturative stress (Tummala-Narra, Deshpande, et al., 2016; Robinson, 2009). Since the election of the 45th President of the United States, there have been increasingly restrictive and discriminatory immigration policies implemented in the United States, some of which specifically target Muslims. Due to these sociopolitical events, South Asians often experience pressure to assimilate to American cultural values to avoid experiencing racism and discrimination (Dey & Sitharthan, 2017). This pressure comes from White American peers, but it can also come from family members placing pressure on their children to be model citizens. Moreover, South Asians express that they often do not feel accepted by White members of their host culture and that they are looked down upon for practicing their heritage culture customs (Dey & Sitharthan, 2017). These experiences of discrimination have been exacerbated by recent events related to the COVID-19 pandemic, where those of Asian-American descent have been targeted in hate crimes. Experiences of hate crimes and discrimination have been demonstrated to negatively impact quality of life (Lund, 2021), which may influence South Asian folks in the U.S. to acculturate to White American culture. South Asians living in the United States experience pressure to acculturate to American customs so that they can have successful and fulfilling lives.

Sociopolitical events not only impact South Asian college students' acculturative stress, but also their symptoms of depression. For South Asians, many of whom are first- or second-generation immigrants, restrictive and discriminatory policies that are directed toward specific aspects of identity (i.e., immigration status and religion) or discrimination from White Americans can lead to depression (Kaduvettoor-Davidson & Inman, 2013). Experiencing acculturative stress can lead to depression for South Asian college students (Chaudhry et al., 2011; Akram-Pall & Moodley, 2016; Jibeen, 2011). The process of trying to preserve heritage cultural norms and familial obligations while learning and acquiring customs from an American culture that can be unaccepting toward South Asian heritage can lead to feeling lonely, afraid, a sense of loss, or depression (Akram-Pall & Moodley, 2016). South Asian college students' mental health problems occur within a historical, social, political, and cultural context that should be considered when understanding their acculturative experiences.

South Asian American college students exist at the intersection of multiple identities that are influenced by historical and sociopolitical events and impact their experiences with acculturative stress. Often, the host culture in which these students reside views their heritage South Asian culture as regressive and static in comparison, failing to recognize the ways in which South Asian culture is ever-changing and nuanced (Narayan, 2013). Additionally, South Asian students may be exposed to the "idea of venerability", or the notion that traditional cultural practices are important to preserve due to their perceived longstanding roots in history and that it is wrong to assimilate or acculturate to the host culture (Narayan, 2013, p. 22). This viewpoint would imply that change in South Asian countries is due to the imposition of Western values. In actuality, change in the cultural norms of South Asian countries has occurred through the interaction of South Asian traditions with Western institutions over time. For example, Indian

schools were created and education for middle-class girls in India became an important requirement through missionaries providing education and the middle-class Indian cultural norms valuing the pursuit of education (Narayan, 2013). It is imperative to note that this change impacted Indian girls of privileged socioeconomic status and that discussions of South Asian cultural values must be sensitive to the fact that the cultural values of privileged groups are often assumed to be values of the whole culture (Narayan, 2013). Within both South Asian countries and Western countries, ideas of “appropriate acculturation” change rapidly and can vary by the context in which they are occurring (Narayan, 2013, p. 29). The history and political narratives surrounding South Asian American cultural values and practices impacts this population’s experiences with acculturative stress and depression. For this reason, it is important to examine the impact that cultural values have on South Asian American college students’ experiences of rejection based on acculturation and how this can lead to depression.

South Asian college students, especially those from middle- or high-class backgrounds, come from collectivistic cultures that emphasize familial duty and academic achievement while minimizing the importance of mental health (Rao et al., 2003; Schwartz et al., 2010; Tummala-Narra, 2013). In a university environment, students are introduced into a culture that promotes individualistic values and modern Western patriarchal ideals (i.e., both males and females are expected to work and support themselves financially). Patriarchal ideals in South Asian culture are steeped in the cultural values and expectations of male and female South Asians (Akram-Pall & Moodley, 2016). For South Asian males, patriarchal ideals revolve around providing financial support to the family through an ambitious career and being a strong leader of the family unit (Akram-Pall & Moodley, 2016). For South Asian females, patriarchal ideals center around being an emotional caretaker for the family and prioritizing care of the home and family needs over

one's own needs (Akram-Pall & Moodley, 2016). Cultural gender norms impact South Asian college students' believed obligations to their families.

Extant literature suggests that South Asian college students experience acculturative stress and depression in the current sociopolitical climate and that their experiences are shaped by their heritage culture's patriarchal ideologies regarding gender and obligations to family. The purpose of the current study is to explore how South Asian college students' beliefs about their obligations to family members are related to the relationship between acculturative stress and depressive symptoms. Given that there are significant differences in patriarchal ideals for male and female South Asians, this study purposefully analyzes the differences between these two groups in how specific beliefs about their obligations to family are associated with their experiences of acculturative stress and depression in a university setting.

South Asian Culture: Values and Patriarchal Ideologies

South Asia is comprised of eight countries (i.e., Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal, India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka) and contains a diverse population. South Asians practice many different religions (e.g., Hinduism, Islam, Sikhism, Jainism, Buddhism, Christianity, etc.), speak many languages (e.g., Hindi, Urdu, Bengali, Tamil, Telegu, Gujarati, Punjabi, etc.), and have many traditions that are specialized to the geographic area in which people originate. At the same time, people of South Asian descent have a shared history of colonization by the British Empire and subsequent imposition of Western ideals onto systems of governance, education, and social structures (Tummala-Narra, 2013; Narayan, 2013). These events created a narrative of “cultural difference” between Western and South Asian cultures first as a way to justify colonization, and then as a way to challenge it (Narayan, 2013). Experiences of power and privilege based on Western ideals impact those with marginalized

identities within the South Asian population in the United States. There is diversity within this population in terms of socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, gender identity, ability, skin color, and more. For example, South Asian people vary in their skin color, from light skin to dark skin, but Western ideals imparted during colonization reinforce the notion that light skin is superior to dark skin (Jha & Adelman, 2009). These Western ideals lead to both interracial and intraracial experiences of discrimination for South Asians with dark skin (Jha & Adelman, 2009). Similarly, Western cisheteropatriarchal ideals imparted during colonization have contributed to the oppression of sexual and gender diverse South Asians (Ching et al., 2018). Socioeconomic status can impact the cultural values that a family holds in regard to gender roles, education, and acculturation (Narayan, 2013). Underlying the diversity of these various intersecting identities, there are collectivistic, family-oriented values embedded throughout South Asian culture. Ultimately, colonization created a mentality in which South Asian people strive to maintain their heritage, cultural values, and ideals while being influenced by the Western ideals that have been imposed on them throughout history (Tummala-Narra, 2013).

Although it is one of the most pervasive Western ideals for South Asian Americans, the model minority myth is an enormous disservice to all marginalized populations in the United States. The model minority myth refers to the widespread belief that Asian Americans are exemplary in their ability to achieve educational, economic, and cultural success in the United States (Yoo et al., 2010). This myth maintains expectations for South Asians, and other Asian American groups, to conform to White American ideals of individualism, self-reliance, and the “American Dream” (Yoo et al., 2010). Not only does this create unfair expectations for South Asians to achieve the American ideal, it also perpetuates the notion that Black, Latinx, and Indigenous people are not overcoming racism due to some implied inability to fulfill these same

expectations and negates the different lived experiences of these populations (Yi & Todd, 2021; Chao et al., 2013). The model minority myth creates pressure for South Asian Americans to fulfill this belief by pursuing educations and careers where they expect to achieve upward mobility, which can create psychological distress (Yoo et al., 2010; Atkin et al., 2018). Furthermore, this myth ignores the diversity of socioeconomic status within South Asian populations and serves to benefit those who immigrate to the United States with higher education degrees or those who have access to generational wealth (Yoo et al., 2010). Moreover, one of the most detrimental effects of the model minority myth is that it minimizes the experiences of discrimination and trauma that South Asian Americans face in the United States. Currently, there are social justice movements, such as Stop AAPI Hate, that bring awareness to the ways that Asian-Americans are being negatively impacted by discrimination and double standards that are perpetuated in the model minority myth (Nadal et al., 2019). However, these movements are still gaining traction and can often be overlooked by the wider public because of the perception that South Asian Americans have a “better” experience than other marginalized groups in the U.S. Many South Asian Americans experience acculturative stress, and subsequently depression, because they internalize the expectations placed upon them by the model minority myth to achieve the American Dream.

South Asian familism values and patriarchal ideologies regarding gender have an impact on South Asian college students’ beliefs about their obligations to family, acculturative stress experiences, and depression symptoms as well as how each of these constructs are related to one another (See Mucchi-Faina et al., 2010; Akram-Pall & Moodley, 2016; Bhattacharya & Schoppelrey, 2004). As a whole, South Asian culture is collectivistic; specifically, people of South Asian descent value collective decision-making, emotionally and physically close

relationships, and a strong sense of group identity (Schwartz et al., 2010). Furthermore, there are clear hierarchical and patriarchal relationships in families of South Asian culture (Tummala-Narra, 2013). There is no term that specifically refers to South Asian familism values; however, filial piety, a term used to describe Asian familial values, describes the importance of respecting one's parents, deferring to authority, and obeying the wishes of elders and authority figures (Kim, 2010). Filial piety has been found to be an important value for South Asians, along with the duty to love and display gratitude and deference to one's parents (Kim, 2010). Children of South Asian families are often taught that respecting their elders means to listen to and obey their elder family members' wishes and not to contradict what their elders say (Schwartz et al., 2010).

Gender roles for males and females in South Asian culture follow hierarchical and patriarchal relationship guidelines. Rapid economic and social change within South Asia that is influenced by Western institutions (e.g., the increase of women joining the workforce due to economic growth in the region) has brought with it a concern that traditional culture is under threat of "Westernization" for many South Asian people, a concern that fails to recognize the change in gendered expectations that has already been occurring within South Asian culture (Narayan, 2013, p. 20). Due to the fear of "Westernization", South Asian women are often conferred the task of preserving the heritage culture for the family and as such are viewed as the caretakers of the home and family (Tummala-Narra, 2013; Narayan, 2013). Within this gendered expectation, women are expected to be the emotional caretakers for their family and often are taught to put aside their own emotions, needs, and desires for the good of the family (Tummala-Narra, 2013). For Indian college students, obligations to provide psychological support to family members seem to be more important than traditional norms (i.e., norms related to deferring to family wishes and making decisions based on family members' opinions); however, Indian

women value traditional norms more than Indian men do (Mucchi-Faina et al., 2010). Mucchi-Faina, Pacilli, and Verma's study suggests that providing and receiving emotional support from family members seems to be an important obligation for both Indian men and women; however, there are gender differences in the importance of putting aside one's needs and desires for the family (2010). Namely, women seem to value this obligation more than men, suggesting that patriarchal ideals impact how South Asian men and women internalize their obligations to their family (Mucchi-Faina et al., 2010). Furthermore, women are encouraged to maintain a pure and chaste reputation based on their sexuality and appearance (e.g., dressing modestly and not dating or engaging in sexual relationships) in order to preserve the family's honor (Tummala-Narra, 2013). At the same time, it is important to note that these expectations are constantly being challenged and evolving based on the contradictory messages that South Asian women receive from their mothers and other family members regarding the impact of these expectations on their well-being (Narayan, 2013).

Conversely, South Asian men of privileged socioeconomic backgrounds experience pressure to perform well in school and achieve financial success in their career so that they can provide financial support to their parents, wives, and children (Bhattacharya & Schoppelrey, 2004). Additionally, South Asian men are taught to refrain from expressing emotional vulnerability and, instead, are taught to remain stoic and strong to support the women and elders in their life (Arora et al., 2016). South Asian men are also expected to monitor the women in their families to make sure they are upholding the honor of the family name (Jibeen & Hynie, 2012). Additionally, South Asian men are expected to bring honor to the family name through financial success and upward mobility (Bhattacharya & Schoppelrey, 2004). In general, research indicates Asian American men believe that masculinity is related to success in one's career,

respectfulness, responsibility for one's actions, an ability to be logical, and an obligation to take care of others (Kyler-Yano & Mankowski, 2020). Additionally, research with Mexican American men in college suggests that belonging to a higher social class, adhering to familism values and Mexican cultural values, and having less traditional male role attitudes were related to well-being (Ojeda et al., 2016). This finding speaks to the nuance in adhering to traditional cultural values leading to well-being (i.e., familism values may lead to greater well-being whereas rigid gender role beliefs may not) as well as the importance of considering the role of privilege (i.e., social class) in determining well-being.

Due to these differences in patriarchal ideologies concerning gender in South Asian culture, attitudinal familism values are expressed differently for South Asian males and females. In fact, South Asian patriarchal ideals seem to have an impact on how beliefs about obligations to family are internalized for South Asian males and females. For Asian-American males, research indicates that they experience more pressure to take a job close to their parents and place more importance on family togetherness as a value than Asian-American females (Toyokawa & Toyokawa, 2013). These gender differences in values can be attributed to the different obligations that males and females are socialized to adhere to in Asian culture. For this reason, the current study examines the relationships between attitudinal familism, acculturative stress, and depression separately for South Asian males and females.

Acculturative Stress and Depression

Acculturative stress is the distress that occurs when a person is going through an acculturative process and experiences pressure to both maintain the practices, languages, and values of their heritage culture and adopt the practices, language, and values of the host culture (Rodriguez et al., 2002). According to Rodriguez et al., it is comprised of four components:

English competency pressure, heritage language competency pressure, pressure to acculturate, and pressure against acculturation (2002). English competency pressure is the pressure one has from people in their social circles to learn and speak English. Heritage language competency pressure is the pressure one has from people in their social circles to learn and speak their heritage language. The pressure to acculturate component includes the pressures that one experiences to adopt the practices and values that are part of their host culture. Contrastingly, the pressure against acculturation component includes the pressures that one experiences to maintain the practices and values that are part of their heritage culture. Each of these four components are impacted by people's social and cultural environment (Rodriguez et al., 2002). Many of the difficulties that South Asian college students face can be understood through the acculturative process and resulting acculturative stress.

Acculturation for South Asian college students is an ongoing process of navigating familial expectations while also conforming to the American cultural norms that many of their peers perform. Broadly, acculturation is a process of balancing the acquisition of new cultural values and practices from the dominant culture with the maintenance of heritage cultural values and practices (Berry, 1997). For South Asians, this process is fraught with familial expectations to preserve cultural values and traditions while bringing honor and status to the family, which can cause stress for these students (Bhattacharya & Schoppelrey, 2004). South Asian college students often feel pressure from their family and South Asian community to maintain their heritage values while simultaneously feeling pressure from their peers to adopt Western cultural values and norms (e.g., Bhattacharya & Schoppelrey, 2004; Akram-Pall & Moodley, 2016). The pressure associated with the acculturative process can be a source of stress for South Asian immigrants and impact mental health and well-being (Chaudhry et al., 2011). South Asian

college students' experiences of acculturation can lead to acculturative stress, depending on how they are able to cope with experiences of rejection based on their cultural values.

South Asian college students experience acculturative stress in a myriad of ways due to the conflicting social pressures that come from their families, communities, and peers. Many South Asian students feel pressure to achieve the educational and career opportunities that their parents migrated for while maintaining their heritage culture (Tummala-Narra, Deshpande, et al., 2016; Bhattacharya & Schoppelrey, 2004). This pressure is conducive to acculturative stress experiences because many of the values and ideals that South Asians are expected to simultaneously hold can exist in conflict of each other (e.g., maintaining the collectivistic and family-oriented values of South Asian culture while performing well in academic and work settings that value individualistic behavior; Bashir & Tang, 2018). For example, South Asian college students may experience pressure to learn their heritage culture language and speak it fluently at home but also experience pressure to learn English and speak it fluently at work and school. Additionally, South Asian students who have an accent while speaking English are believed to be less competent and can often experience discrimination based on the way that they speak English (Souza et al., 2016). Research indicates that South Asian students experience stress when trying to navigate between cultural contexts characterized by experiences of discrimination, conflict with their parents, and a dual sense of self (Tummala-Narra, Deshpande, et al., 2016). The stress associated with acculturation can be harmful to South Asian college students' mental health.

Symptoms of depression are often overlooked in South Asian culture, and many South Asians believe experiencing depression is shameful (Thapar-Olmos & Myers, 2018). Since there is a lack of knowledge around mental health and stigma around seeking treatment for mental

health, South Asians tend to notice and seek treatment for psychosomatic or behavioral symptoms of depression — such as appetite changes, sleep disturbances, feelings of fatigue, physical pain, gastrointestinal symptoms, and changes in their ability to relate to others — than the cognitive and affective symptoms (e.g., Karasz et al., 2012; Laher et al., 2018). Somatic problems are more socially acceptable to disclose in South Asian culture, contributing to the idea that depression manifests psychosomatically for South Asians (Sharma et al., 2011). Research has found that South Asian people tend to refrain from using the word, “depression,” due to the associated stigma and instead are more likely to use the word “tension” to describe the symptoms they are experiencing (Karasz et al., 2012). In fact, research suggests that South Asian people believe depression occurs due to social problems and associate it with worry and distress related to interpersonal issues (Perera & Chang, 2015; Sharma et al., 2011). Psychosomatic symptoms are viewed as normal reactions to social stressors such as family conflict, the loss of family ties, and loneliness (Karasz et al., 2012). For example, evidence suggests that conflicting patriarchal ideals between heritage and host culture results in strained relationships with family members, leading to symptoms of depression for South Asian women (Noor, 2017; Laher et al., 2018). Psychosomatic symptoms represent the majority of reported depression symptoms for South Asians.

At the same time, South Asian people also experience cognitive and affective symptoms of depression. Specifically, Bangladeshi women identified emotional symptoms of depression such as anger, sadness, worry, and fear (Karasz et al., 2012). Additionally, research with patients from a clinic in Iran reported there were maladaptive cognitive schemas that characterized these patients’ experiences with depression and somatic symptoms such as beliefs that one’s emotional or social needs will not be met in a predictable manner, the belief that one is shameful for having

emotions or expressing themselves, the belief that one is unable to function autonomously, beliefs that involve an excessive focus on others' desires and emotions and a duty to self-sacrifice or subjugate to others, etc. (Davoodi et al., 2018). This research from a similarly collectivistic culture with a strong emphasis on family values provides a non-Western perspective on the maladaptive cognitive schemas that may occur for South Asian people experiencing depression or somatic symptoms. However, the majority of research regarding depression centers on South Asian women, so it is unclear if some of these symptoms of depression manifest differently for South Asian men.

Extant literature has established a relationship between acculturative stress and depression for South Asians in the Western world. Research suggests that there is a positive relationship between acculturative stress and depression for South Asians (Akram-Pall & Moodley, 2016; Chaudhry et al., 2011; Tummala-Narra et al., 2016). A qualitative study of South Asian Muslim immigrants indicated that this relationship between acculturative stress and depression is caused by a fear of discrimination, difficulty learning the host language, a lack of opportunities, as well as a loss of one's social, religious, and gender identities that occur when immigrating to their host country (Akram-Pall & Moodley, 2016). Moreover, there are certain factors that impact the strength of this relationship, such as perceived social support and a belief in one's ability to handle life stresses (Jibeen, 2011). For Pakistani women living in the United Kingdom, a lack of familiarity with the English language predicted experiences of depression (Chaudhry et al., 2011). Additionally, research with Mexican and Mexican American college students demonstrates that acculturative stress contributes to depression, particularly when students perceive there to be interpersonal distancing from their family and feel that they do not belong in their institutional context due to their culture (Cano et al., 2014). Based on the existing

literature on the relationship between acculturative stress for South Asians and college students, it is important to study how these variables are related to one another for South Asian college students, many of whom are trying to understand their intersecting identities and roles as they attend university and maintain their relationships with family members.

Attitudinal Familism and Depression

Research on how attitudinal familism and depression are related for South Asian college students is limited. However, cultural values and patriarchal ideologies regarding gender influence South Asian college students' experiences of attitudinal familism and depression. First, this section expounds upon attitudinal familism and its four components. Then, each of the four components' relationship to depression is discussed. Although research with this population and topic is limited, extant literature suggests that each of the components has a different relationship to depression, and cultural values and patriarchal ideologies regarding gender impact these relationships.

Attitudinal familism encompasses the set of beliefs, and subsequent attitudes, that people hold about the obligations they have to their family members (Lugo Steidel and Contreras, 2003). It is comprised of four components: familial support, familial interconnectedness, familial honor, and subjugation of self for family. Familial support encompasses the beliefs that one has about their obligations to emotionally and financially support their family members. Familial interconnectedness encompasses the beliefs that one has about their obligations to engage in emotional and physical closeness with their family members. Familial honor encompasses the beliefs that one has about their obligations to uphold the family name. Subjugation of self for family encompasses the beliefs that one has about their obligations to submit to their family's desires rather than follow their own desires. Traditional patriarchal ideals in South Asian culture

cause differences in the emphasis that is placed on each component for South Asian males and females (see e.g., Ahmad et al., 2009; Gilbert et al., 2004; Mucchi-Faina et al., 2010; Toyokawa & Toyokawa, 2013). However, each of these components can be tied to South Asian experiences of depression.

Research establishes a relationship between familial support and depression; generally, familial support is viewed as an important positive factor for South Asian college students. Research indicates that familial support is a protective factor when it comes to experiencing symptoms of depression (Li, 2014; Tummala-Narra, Alegria, et al., 2012). Since South Asian college students come from collectivistic cultural environments, familial support is important for their mental and physical well-being (Ramanathan & Crocker, 2009). Likewise, strained family relationships and a lack of familial support have been linked to symptoms of depression, particularly for South Asian women (Noor, 2017). For South Asian college students, familial support provides a sense of comfort and acts as a protective factor when faced with discrimination. An absence of familial support can contribute to feelings of depression. Familial support, or a lack of familial support, impacts depression experiences for South Asian college students, much like the familial interconnectedness component of attitudinal familism.

Extant research suggests that a lack of familial interconnectedness can have deleterious effects on South Asian college students' mental health. Thomas (2015) found that communication difficulties between Asian Indian parents and their children in college often lead to symptoms of depression for these college students, as well as other internalization problems, such as anxiety and low self-worth. Furthermore, Asian Indian college students described a need to protect others and themselves by not disclosing the emotional problems that they were facing (Thomas, 2015). The results from this study indicate that poor relationships between South Asian

parents and their children in college are characterized by children's low emotional disclosure and internalization of conflict, both of which are associated with depression. These results highlight the importance of close familial relationships and maintaining family harmony. Furthermore, the expectation that South Asian children will remain physically close to their family when choosing a college to attend has also been linked to emotional problems and distress (Bhattacharya & Schoppelrey, 2004). One study has found that British-South Asian caregivers feel anxiety related to their obligations to care for their family members because they are afraid of not fulfilling these obligations (Parveen et al., 2013). The obligation to be emotionally and physically close to one's family has lasting impacts on South Asian college students' symptoms of depression.

Currently, there is little research on the relationship between familial honor and depression for South Asians. Although there is limited research in how familial honor and depression are related, there is evidence to suggest that the high expectations that parents have for their children to bring social status to the family can become a source of stress and negatively impact their children's mental health (Bhattacharya & Schoppelrey, 2004). Furthermore, existing literature does provide information on how familial honor expectations are impacted by patriarchal ideologies. For South Asian males, the obligation of bringing honor to the family is often related to their ability to excel in their careers and financially provide for their family to ensure the family's well-being (Bhattacharya & Schoppelrey, 2004). Conversely, for South Asian females, the obligation of bringing honor to the family is related to high achievement in academic arenas as well as refraining from tarnishing their reputation through dating or engaging in behaviors that may be considered unsuitable for women in their heritage cultural values (Gilbert et al., 2004). For these reasons, obligations to uphold the honor of the family name and their relationship to depression may differ for male and female South Asians. Expectations

around familial honor can be distressing for South Asian college students and the impact of these expectations may be different based on patriarchal ideologies regarding gender.

Currently, there is limited research in how subjugation of self for family impacts experiences of depression; however, there are marked differences in how the obligation can appear for South Asian males and females. South Asian familism values suggest that South Asian children are expected to put aside their own needs for the good for the family, an expectation that is particularly true of South Asian women (Tummala-Narra, 2013). Patriarchal ideals for South Asian women dictate that they should perform household duties or prepare for marriage and silence their desires or needs that do not fit in with these obligations (Ahmad et al., 2009). Additionally, South Asian college students experience immense pressure from wider American society to fulfill the “American dream” and pursue educational and career opportunities that will allow their family to achieve upward mobility (Bhattacharya & Schoppelrey, 2004). As seen in research with Asian-Americans, this pressure can result in these students putting aside their own educational and career interests in order to fulfill this societal pressure, leading to emotional distress (Toyokawa & Toyokawa, 2013). Generally, South Asian culture encourages people to strive toward communalistic goals that serve the family; however, as college students acculturate into the dominant individualistic culture of their academic institutions, this conflict between cultural values can contribute to distress (Schwartz et al., 2010). Literature on patriarchal ideologies concerning gender and emotional distress suggests that subjugation of self for family and depression are important to study for South Asian college students.

Attitudinal Familism and Acculturative Stress

Research on the relationship between attitudinal familism and acculturative stress for South Asian college students is limited. Both attitudinal familism and acculturative stress are comprised of multiple components, and each of the components of acculturative stress are related in a different way to the components of attitudinal familism. Moreover, the results of the extant research are mixed regarding how acculturative stress and attitudinal familism are related to one another. This section explores how the four components of attitudinal familism are related to acculturative stress.

Although research on Asian heritage students suggests that familial support has a positive relationship with acculturative stress (Zhang & Jung, 2017), the nature of the relationship specifically for South Asian students is unclear. Research on how familial support and acculturative stress are related for South Asians can shed light on how stress related to acculturation is either exacerbated or alleviated by having close relationships with family members, providing important implications for mental health treatment. South Asians and East Asians share many similar collectivistic and family-oriented values, so the research on Asian-American populations provides some insight on how attitudinal familism and acculturative stress may be related for South Asians. In a study by Zhang and Jung, Chinese international students reported that they had higher levels of family support than peer support; however, the peer support was more helpful in coping with acculturative stress (2017). The authors explained this by attributing parents' high expectations for their children to be successful in their careers as causing stress for the students (Zhang & Jung, 2017). In this instance, familial support caused more acculturative stress for the Chinese international students while they were learning how to navigate living in their host culture due to the cultural value conflict between them and their parents. This research may be applicable to how South Asian students feel stress because the

obligations of familial support are tied to cultural value conflict and level of acculturation.

Research indicates that familial support may contribute to acculturative stress in some populations, and the same can be said for familial interconnectedness and acculturative stress.

Based on research with East Asian and Latinx populations, familial interconnectedness appears to have a negative relationship with acculturative stress; however, extant research is not clear on the nature of the relationship. Research on how familial interconnectedness and acculturative stress are related for South Asians can provide context for mental health providers to help South Asian college students who are experiencing acculturative stress navigate their relationships with family members. Like South Asians, East Asians and Latinxs share many similar collectivistic and family-oriented values, so research with both Asian-American and Latinx populations can shed some light on how attitudinal familism and acculturative stress may be related for South Asians. Chinese mothers who immigrated to the United States adapted their parenting style to incorporate the host culture values of autonomy and independence while also reinforcing the traditional family values that prioritize emotional closeness and support (Cheah et al., 2013). These mothers adapted their parenting style in this way so that their children would be able to succeed in the cultural environment in the United States (Cheah et al., 2013). This suggests that Chinese parents sacrifice some of their familism values, such as having an emotionally and physically close relationship with their children, so that their children experience less acculturative stress in the United States. For Latinx immigrants, Spanish language proficiency and identification with ethnic culture are associated with higher attitudinal familism; however, English language proficiency is associated with more family conflict (Bostean & Gillespie, 2018). These results suggest that experiencing acculturative stress can lead to less attitudinal familism beliefs (i.e., less familial interconnectedness and higher familial

conflict). Another study with Latinx adolescents found that increased acculturative stress was associated with lower levels of attitudinal familism and higher levels of familial conflict (Buchanan & Smokowski, 2009). For these populations, acculturative stress appears to be negatively correlated to familial interconnectedness; the more acculturative stress one experiences, the more familial conflict occurs, and the less one believes in familial interconnectedness.

Extant literature with Asian-Americans suggests there is a positive relationship between familial honor and acculturative stress. While research with Asian Americans may elucidate the relationship between acculturative stress and family honor, research specifically with South Asians can provide a deeper understanding of how expectations of honor impact SA college students when they are coping with acculturative stress. A study with Chinese international students in the U.S. found that these students reported high levels of family support; however, familial support was not as helpful as peer support when coping with acculturative stress (Zhang & Jung, 2017). The authors found that the pressure family members placed on students with the expectation that students would bring honor to the family through their schoolwork and career caused the students to experience more distress (Zhang & Jung, 2017). Thus, expectations around bringing honor to the family can impede students' ability to cope with acculturative stress and add to students' stress. The results of this study imply that the same effect may be found for South Asian college students, since many South Asian parents expect students to bring honor to the family by fulfilling the American dream. While the obligation to bring honor to the family appears to be positively correlated to acculturative stress, so does the obligation to sacrifice one's needs for the benefit of the family.

Currently, there is no research on the nature of the relationship between the subjugation of self for family component of attitudinal familism and acculturative stress for South Asians, particularly South Asian college students. Research on how putting aside one's desires for the benefit of the family is related to acculturative stress for South Asians may benefit SA college students who adhere to this cultural belief and are seeking therapy. However, recent research with Latinx college students indicates there is a positive relationship between acculturative stress and subjugation of self for family (Davis et al., 2018). Since Latinx populations have similar familism values to South Asians, research with Latinx college students can illuminate how these constructs may be related for South Asian college students. A study with Latinx college students indicated a positive association between attitudinal familism and acculturative stress; moreover, familism values were positively associated with prosocial behaviors that were related to putting others' needs before one's own (Davis et al., 2018). Furthermore, the results indicated that for the students who reported low in familism values, pressure to acculturate was positively correlated with emotional prosocial behaviors (e.g., comforting others when upset). For those with high familism values, pressure to acculturate was negatively associated with emotional prosocial behaviors (Davis et al., 2018). The subjugation of self for family component of familism may play a role in this finding. It is possible that subjugating one's own needs for the family prevents one from being able to do so and also provide emotional resources to peers or people outside of the family. Likewise, if one is not subjugating their own needs for their family, they may have more emotional resources to provide to others. The findings from this study imply that, like these Latinx college students, South Asian college students who are experiencing more pressure to acculturate may sacrifice more of their own needs for their family depending on how they have internalized their familism beliefs. Evidence with other populations suggests that

acculturative stress impacts each of the components of attitudinal familism differently; nevertheless, literature suggests that these variables are important to study for South Asian college students specifically due to their impact on depression.

Purpose of Study

Given that many South Asian college students experience acculturative stress and depression as they navigate familial obligations, and as men and women may experience this differently, the current study seeks to explore how beliefs about familial obligations are related to acculturative stress and depression for South Asian college students. The four components of attitudinal familism (familial support, familial interconnectedness, familial honor, and subjugation of self for family) are examined individually in order to determine how each one impacts the relationship between acculturative stress and depression (see Figure 1). Thus, the following research questions guide this study:

- 1) How do the four components of attitudinal familism buffer the relationship between acculturative stress and depression for South Asian college students, respectively?
- 2) Do the four components of attitudinal familism buffer the relationship between acculturative stress and depression differently for male and female South Asian college students?

Based on the review of the extant literature, the hypotheses are:

Hypothesis 1: There will be a positive relationship between acculturative stress and depression for both male and female South Asian college students.

Hypothesis 2: The components of attitudinal familism will buffer the relationship between acculturative stress and depression for both groups.

Hypothesis 3: The buffering effect of the four different beliefs on the relationship between acculturative stress and depression will be different for male and female college students.

METHODS

Participants and Procedures

Data for the current study was collected as part of the Multi-Site University Study of Identity and Culture (MUSIC), which was a collaborative effort among 30 colleges and universities in the United States (Castillo & Schwartz, 2013; Weisskirch et al., 2013). Data was collected from racially diverse undergraduate students in social sciences courses between September 2008 and October 2009. Over 10,000 participants provided their consent and completed the survey online. The MUSIC survey was administered in English and collected information about participants' demographic data, identity, cultural beliefs, and mental health. The current study used the pre-existing, de-identified data collected from the MUSIC survey.

Characteristics of Sample

Given the scope of the study, the data from the MUSIC survey were limited to participants who self-identified as South Asian ($n = 307$) when asked to identify their ethnic background ("My ethnicity is..."). If they identified as biracial or multiracial, participants were then able to identify the racial and/or ethnic groups they belong to ("If you are Biracial/Multiracial, please answer item 3 as best you can, and then specify the racial/ethnic groups to which you belong") and which racial group they identified with most ("If you are Biracial/Multiracial, which group do you identify with most?"). Within this sample, there were 40 participants who identified as biracial or multiracial. The survey also asked participants to select the ethnicity of their mother and father. Participants were asked to select their gender between the options of male and female. Within the sample of South Asian students, there were 217 self-identified females and 88 self-identified males. Participants were asked, "How far is your university from where you primarily grew up?" and their responses indicated that the

distance between their university and where they grew up ranged from 0 to 9,500 miles ($M = 388.39$; $SD = 1237.55$). Participants ages ranged from 18 to 33 ($M = 19.9$; $SD = 2.08$), years in college ranged from 0 to 16 ($M = 2.32$; $SD = 1.55$), and annual family income ranged from below \$30,000 to over \$100,000 ($M = 2.46$; $SD = 1.09$).

Measures

Attitudinal Familism Scale

The Attitudinal Familism Scale (AFS; Lugo Steidal & Contreras, 2003) is an 18-item scale that measures the extent to which participants agree with traditional beliefs about familial obligations. Participants used a 5-point Likert Scale that ranged from (1) *Strongly Disagree* to (5) *Strongly Agree* to record their responses. It consists of four subscales that measure different types of beliefs: Familial Support, Familial Interconnectedness, Familial Honor, and Subjugation of Self for Family. The Familial Support subscale consists of six items and measures participants' beliefs about their obligation to emotionally and financially support family members (e.g., "A person should live near his or her parents and spend time with them on a regular basis"). The Familial Interconnectedness subscale consists of five items and measures participants' beliefs about their obligation to engage in emotional and physical closeness with family members (e.g., "Parents and grandparents should be treated with great respect regardless of their differences in views"). The Familial Honor subscale consists of four items and measures participants' beliefs about their obligation to uphold the honor of the family name (e.g., "A person should feel ashamed if something he or she does dishonors the family name"). The Subjugation of Self for Family subscale consists of three items and measures participants' beliefs about their obligation to put aside one's own needs for the needs of the family (e.g., "Children should obey their parents without question even if they believe they are wrong"). Alphas for

Familial Support, Familial Interconnectedness, Familial Honor, and Subjugation of Self for Family were 0.84, 0.85, 0.69, and 0.73, respectively. Cronbach's alpha suggests that participants' scores on this measure are reliable ($\alpha = 0.91$).

Multidimensional Acculturative Stress Inventory

The Multidimensional Acculturative Stress Inventory (MASI; Rodriguez et al., 2002) is a 25-item scale that measures the discomfort and rejection that occurs when navigating how one adheres to one's heritage cultural values, language, and customs while living in and adopting the values, language, and customs of their host culture. Participants used a 5-point Likert Scale that ranged from (1) *Strongly Disagree* to (5) *Strongly Agree* to record their responses. There are four subscales of the MASI: Heritage Language Competency Pressures, English Competency Pressures, Pressure to Acculturate, and Pressure Against Acculturation. The Heritage Language Competency Pressures subscale consists of seven items and measures the extent to which participants have experienced social or cultural pressure to learn and speak their heritage language (e.g., "I feel uncomfortable being around people who only speak my family's heritage language"). The English Competency Pressures subscale consists of seven items and measures the extent to which participants have experienced social or cultural pressure to learn and speak English (e.g., "I have been discriminated against because I have difficulty speaking English"). The Pressure to Acculturate subscale consists of seven items and measures the extent to which participants experienced social pressure to adopt the values, language, and customs of their host culture (e.g., "Because of my cultural background, I have a hard time fitting in with White Americans"). The Pressure Against Acculturation subscale consists of four items and measures the extent to which participants experienced social pressure to maintain the values, language, and customs of their heritage culture (e.g., "People look down upon me if I practice American

customs”). Cronbach’s alpha was $\alpha = 0.91$, suggesting that participants’ scores on this measure are reliable.

Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale

The Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale (CES-D; Radloff, 1977) is a 20-item scale that measures participants' self-reported symptoms of depression. Participants used a 5-point Likert Scale that ranged from (1) *Strongly Disagree* to (5) *Strongly Agree* to record their responses. The items measure participants cognitive (e.g., “People didn’t like me this week”), affective (e.g., “I have felt down and unhappy this week”), and behavioral symptoms of depression (e.g., “This week, I didn’t sleep as well as usual”). Cronbach’s alpha suggests that participants’ scores on this measure are reliable ($\alpha = 0.91$).

RESULTS

Preliminary Analysis

Average acculturative stress scores and depression scores were 54.3 ($SD = 16.81$) and 54.99 ($SD = 12.71$), respectively. The means and standard deviations for each of the attitudinal familism components are as follows: familial support ($M = 23.54$, $SD = 4.46$), familial interconnectedness ($M = 20.39$, $SD = 3.65$), familial honor ($M = 12.36$, $SD = 3.40$), and subjugation of self for family ($M = 10.56$, $SD = 2.62$). Table 1 summarizes the bivariate correlations and descriptive statistics of the study variables.

In order to analyze data via structural equational modeling, the data must meet assumptions of a normal distribution (Schreiber et al., 2006). To evaluate whether data met these assumptions, tests for homoscedasticity, normality, linearity, and outliers were conducted. A quantile-quantile plot of the independent and dependent variables was examined in order to evaluate normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity. Results from the Q-Q plot demonstrate that data appears as a roughly straight line with some data at the ends of the Q-Q plot deviating from the straight line, suggesting that data meets assumptions for normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity.

Boxplots of all study variables were examined in order to assess whether outliers may be impacting correlation coefficients. Results from the boxplots suggest that there are a small number of outliers; however, the responses were evaluated, and the outliers were included in the analysis because the outliers appear to be due to natural variation within the sample, rather than random responding or an error.

Skewness and kurtosis of all study variables were checked to evaluate normality. Some of the study variables had skewness and kurtosis values that exceeded the typical acceptable range

associated with a normal distribution; however, extant literature suggests that SEM can provide accurate results when some assumptions of normality are violated (Reinartz et al., 2009).

Finally, multicollinearity was assessed by examining bivariate correlations to identify relationships between variables with a coefficient value of 0.85 or higher. Results indicate none of the bivariate correlations met or exceeded the recommended limit.

Main Analysis

Using StataSE Version 16.1 software, a structural equation model (Figure 1) was tested to examine the impact of acculturative stress on depression for male and female South Asian students. The statistical software provided information about the overall fit of the model to the data with Familial Support, Familial Interconnectedness, Familial Honor, and Subjugation of Self for Family as moderators. A multi-group SEM model was created and estimated to assess the effect of sex (i.e., male or female) across all variables for South Asian college students (See Figure 2). To facilitate interpretation of the results, all predictor variables were centered on the mean. Additionally, the model controlled for the participants' immigrant generation as well as the number of years that they spent in college at the time of the survey. Maximum likelihood estimation was used to account for any missing data. The model pathways were determined to be statistically significant if the p-values were less than 0.05 ($p < 0.05$).

In order to assess fit of the model, fit indices (i.e., chi squared, RMSEA, SRMR, and CFI) would normally be considered. However, the model is just identified (i.e., saturated). A just identified, or saturated, model is one in which the number of free parameters, or paths and covariances between variables that are being estimated in the model, is equal to the number of known values (Raykov et al, 2013). In other words, this is a model with zero degrees of freedom. When a model is just-identified, goodness-of-fit indices are not meaningful because the formulas

for the fit indices use the degrees of freedom to compute model fit. Since the degrees of freedom is zero, the formulas indicate that there is a perfect model fit, but it is not meaningful (χ^2 : 0, RMSEA: 0, CFI: 1.0). It did not make theoretical sense to modify the model, given the limited extant research with these variables for South Asian college students. Finally, a t-test and chi-square difference test were used to test whether the male and female groups were significantly different. The model was interpreted based on these results.

Hypothesis 1

Results demonstrate there is a positive relationship between acculturative stress and depression for both male and female South Asian college students (Male: $\beta = 0.39$, $p = 0.00$; Female: $\beta = 0.17$, $p = 0.01$). These results are consistent with the hypothesis that higher levels of acculturative stress significantly predict higher levels of depression for male and female South Asian college students.

Hypothesis 2

Based on the analysis, the familial honor component of attitudinal familism appears to buffer the relationship between acculturative stress and depression for both the male and female groups. The familial honor subscale does significantly moderate the relationship between acculturative stress and depression for both male and female South Asian college students (Male: $\beta = 0.06$, $p = 0.03$; Female: $\beta = -0.06$, $p = 0.03$). There is also evidence to suggest that familial honor moderates the relationship differently for male and female South Asian college students. Specifically, the familial honor moderator impacts the strength of the relationship between acculturative stress and depression differently for males and females. For males, the interaction between acculturative stress and familial honor positively predicts depression. Contrastingly, for females, the interaction between acculturative stress and familial honor negatively predicts

depression. In other words, the association between acculturative stress and depression was reduced for female participants who reported a greater degree of familial honor beliefs. Conversely, the association between acculturative stress and depression was strengthened for male participants who reported a greater degree of familial honor beliefs.

At the same time, results from the analysis also indicate that familial support, familial interconnectedness, and subjugation of self for family do not moderate the relationship between acculturative stress and depression for South Asian college students. The p-value for each of these interaction terms was greater than 0.05 and therefore, cannot be determined as a significant source of moderation in the association between acculturative stress and depression.

Hypothesis 3

Results from the t-test and chi-square difference test indicate that there was no significant difference between the male and female groups in terms of the extent to which they experience depressive symptoms ($t(251) = -0.65, p = 0.51$; $\chi^2(69) = 81.6370, p = 0.142$). This finding provides evidence against the hypothesis that South Asian patriarchal ideologies impact male and female college students' experiences of attitudinal familism, acculturative stress, and depression.

DISCUSSION

This study expands on previous research on determinants of mental health for South Asian college students by examining how acculturative stress and depression are related for South Asian college students and how the components of attitudinal familism impact this relationship. Additionally, the study examined how patriarchal ideologies of gender may impact the relationships between these variables for this population. The most significant findings are that there is a significant positive relationship between acculturative stress and depression for both male and female South Asian college students. Although there was no significant difference between the male and female groups, there is evidence to suggest that the familial honor component of attitudinal familism moderates the association between acculturative stress and depression differently for males and females.

Consistent with Hypothesis 1, results suggest that acculturative stress is significantly and positively associated with depression for both male and female South Asian college students. In other words, South Asian college students who experience pressure to maintain their heritage language and cultural values and pressure to speak English and conform to American cultural values report feeling more sad, lethargic, and lonely. On the other hand, those who do not experience these pressures reported fewer or less intense feelings of sadness and isolation. This finding is consistent with extant research with South Asian college students that links difficulty fitting in or feeling accepted by people from one's heritage or host culture and difficulty speaking one's heritage language or English to feeling sad, irritable, hopeless, and isolated (e.g., Bhattacharya & Schoppelrey, 2004; Akram-Pall & Moodley, 2016; Chaudhry et al., 2011; Jibeen, 2011). Experiencing discomfort, social pressure, or discrimination due to not being able to speak or understand one's heritage language or speak or understand English may lead to South

Asian students experiencing symptoms of depression (i.e., low mood, irritability, hopelessness, isolation, difficulty concentrating, and fatigue). Likewise, feeling a lack of acceptance or discrimination due to practicing one's heritage customs and values or American customs and values may also lead to South Asian students experiencing the aforementioned symptoms of depression. This conclusion is supported by extant research that connects a lack of social acceptance and experiences of discrimination due to adhering to one's heritage culture language and values or American language and values to feeling sad, isolated, irritable, fatigued, and hopeless (e.g., Bhattacharya & Schoppelrey, 2004; Akram-Pall & Moodley, 2016; Chaudhry et al., 2011). This finding lays the groundwork for future research to investigate the sources of discrimination that are impacting South Asian college students and how this impacts their mental health. Racial trauma is understood as the symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder that Black, Indigenous, and people of color experience as a result of experiencing overt racism, systemic racism, and microaggressions over time and has been demonstrated to contribute to depression (Bryant-Davis, 2007; Nadal et al., 2019). Future research should seek to examine how much of South Asian college students' experiences of acculturative stress may be explained by racial trauma and how social relationships and belongingness impact South Asian college students' mental health. Additionally, future research should investigate how the four components of acculturative stress (i.e., English competency pressure, heritage language competency pressure, pressure to acculturate, and pressure against acculturation) may each impact South Asian college students' symptoms of depression differently.

Furthermore, results of the study suggest that familial honor significantly moderates the relationship between acculturative stress and depression for female college students. The association between acculturative stress and depression was reduced for female participants who

reported a greater degree of beliefs in familial honor (e.g., beliefs that children should live with their parents until they get married, defend the family name, and should feel ashamed if they do anything to harm the family name). In other words, female South Asian college students who believe they have a duty to uphold their family name by living with and providing for their family and feel a lack of acceptance or discrimination due to practicing one's heritage customs and values or American customs and values may not always experience feelings of sadness, hopeless, and isolation. Perhaps familial honor calls on South Asian American women to find ways to alleviate the feelings of isolation that they experience in both their heritage and host cultures by maintaining a "respectful" image for the family. It is possible that believing they have a duty to uphold family honor and experiencing discrimination or a lack of acceptance from people due to how these women conform to their heritage cultural values and customs and American cultural values and norms may have an ameliorative effect for female South Asian college students' mental health. This may be due to the fact that South Asian women are socialized to spend more time in the home and find community within their family and heritage community members, thus these familism values are leading to better psychological health (Corona et al., 2017; Campos et al., 2014, Masood et al., 2009). Future research should explore how female South Asian college students use social support to cope with distress related to acculturation and what some of the risk factors for depression are for this population.

In addition, results of the current study suggest that familial honor significantly moderates the relationship between acculturative stress and depression for male college students. The association between acculturative stress and depression was strengthened for male participants who reported a greater degree of beliefs in familial honor (e.g., beliefs that children should provide financial support to the family, defend the family name, and should feel ashamed

if they do anything to harm the family name). Male South Asian college students who believe they have a duty to uphold their family name and experience rejection for how they adhere to their heritage culture and American culture values are more likely to experience feelings of sadness and isolation. It is possible that familial honor calls on South Asian American men to find ways to alleviate the feelings of rejection that they experience in both their heritage and host cultures by achieving financial success and upward mobility to the family. Thus, there are expectations for South Asian men to spend increased time in individualistic American work environments to provide for their families, which can lead to greater cultural conflict, more experiences of discrimination, and emotional distress (Bashir & Tang, 2018; Masood et al., 2009). Future research should explore how cultural conflict between heritage and host culture values is related to South Asian males' sense of identity and feelings of sadness and loneliness.

Contrary to expectations, the other subscales of attitudinal familism (i.e., familial support, familial interconnectedness, and subjugation of self for family) did not moderate the association between acculturative stress and depression for South Asian college students. This may be due to the possibility that the positive relationship between acculturative stress and depression is caused by experiences of discrimination that occur outside of the family context. This would suggest that South Asian American experiences of "otherness" in American society are related to sociopolitical and historical events (e.g., discrimination based on 9/11, or Asian hate crimes) that cannot be alleviated by just familial closeness or support. In fact, evidence suggests that experiences of discrimination or microaggressions that occur in school and work environments are significantly associated with trauma and depression (Nadal et al., 2019). Conversely, familial honor is related to how society perceives the individual, which is why it does impact the relationship between acculturative stress and depression. Future research should explore whether

these beliefs are related to South Asian college students' experiences of depression and how experiences of discrimination based on race and ethnicity are related to acculturative stress and depression for South Asian Americans.

Findings from the current study supported the hypothesis that the male and female groups would be impacted differently by attitudinal familism beliefs. The male and female groups were different in terms of how familial honor impacted the relationship between acculturative stress and depression. However, the groups were not significantly different in terms of how strongly they endorsed symptoms of depression. For both male and female South Asian students, experiencing rejection related to how one adheres to South Asian customs and adopts American customs leads to feelings of sadness. Furthermore, beliefs about familial obligations of financial and emotional support, closeness, and respect, do not seem to impact this relationship for either males or females. Male and female South Asian students may have similar experiences of social rejection and discrimination related to how they express their heritage and host cultures, leading them to have similar experiences of depression (Akram-Pall & Moodley, 2016). However, beliefs about bringing honor to the family does impact the relationship differently for the male and female groups, suggesting that gender socialization and differing expectations based on sex may impact how honor is viewed for South Asian American college students. High honor beliefs strengthened the relationship between acculturative stress and depression for the male group and weakened the relationship between acculturative stress and depression for the female group. This difference between the groups may be explained by differing expectations for honorable behaviors that impact South Asian college students' ability to find community and support. For example, females are expected to bring honor to the family by remaining close and creating a family of their own, while males are expected to bring honor to the family through achieving

success in school and work environments. In these differing environments, women are encouraged to find support and closeness in their community and males are more susceptible to experiences of discrimination in the workplace, which can contribute to differences in distress levels. Future research should examine how experiences of discrimination occur for South Asian Americans and the impact of these experiences on mental health.

Limitations

There are limitations to the current study that impact the generalizability of the results. One of the major limitations of the study is that South Asians are grouped together for the purposes of this study. Data collection methods and the limited response of South Asian students to the survey led to the decision to group all South Asian students together for this study. Although South Asians share many common cultural values and historical events, South Asians are not a monolithic group, and there is diversity within this population in terms of religion, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, skin color, immigration status, accent, and more (South Asian Americans Leading Together, 2019). Future studies would benefit from studying these concepts within specific South Asian cultural groups from an intersectional perspective in order to better understand how specific cultural values and identities impact the role of attitudinal familism on the relationship between acculturative stress and depression.

A second limitation of the current study is that the study does not account for gender diversity within the sample. The study analyzes male and female South Asian college students but does not take into account that some of these students may identify as transgender, gender non-conforming, non-binary, or genderqueer. The experiences of gender diverse South Asian students may be vastly different from the experiences of cisgender South Asian students, such as discrimination and oppression due to their multiple marginalized identities, which contributes to

more negative mental and sexual health outcomes (Ching et al., 2018). An important avenue for future research would be to explore how gender identity impacts South Asian college students' experiences of familism, acculturative stress, and depression, particularly for transgender and gender non-conforming folks.

A third limitation of the study is that the sample size is relatively small, particularly for South Asian male college students. Due to the smaller sample size, the statistical power is less than it would be with a larger sample and may impact the reliability of the results (Wolf et al., 2013). Another limitation to the study is that the 30 colleges were nested in the analysis; however, this was corrected for by conducting a multigroup SEM. Since data was collected through surveying students in social science courses in universities, there may also be some limitations around the types of students that may select to take these courses that may be impacting results. Future research in this area would benefit from adapting sampling procedures to encourage South Asian males' participation in research, perhaps by surveying students in a wider variety of majors and courses.

A final limitation of this study is that many of the scales used in the study were originally developed based on Latinx values and culture. Although the alpha values indicate that the scales fit the sample, there may be some doubt as to whether the items fit the exact cultural values and beliefs of the South Asian sample. There may be some cultural values or beliefs that were represented within the items of the scales that did not apply to this specific population in the same manner, thus skewing the results. Cultural measurement equivalence deals with issues of validity for psychological measures that are used in cross-cultural research and cautions against assuming that measures may be used indiscriminately across populations (Trimble & Vaughn, 2013). Future research would benefit from developing culturally specific scales for South Asian

Americans in order to better understand this population. Despite these limitations, the current study has important implications for the counseling and inclusion of South Asian college students.

Implications

Results from the current study have important implications for South Asian college students and counseling. University counseling centers (UCC) are often at the forefront of multicultural counseling interventions. Mental health practitioners working with South Asian college students at a UCC would benefit from learning about how cultural attitudes about upholding family honor impact these students' mental health so they can integrate this information into their counseling sessions. Moreover, this study has implications for how practitioners can ask South Asian college students about their stress associated with acculturation in order to address their mental health needs. UCCs would benefit from providing training and supervision to mental health practitioners about culturally sensitive interventions that consider this populations' cultural values and traditions.

Mental health practitioners working with South Asian college students should assess sources of acculturative stress for their clients by asking clients about their experiences with both their heritage culture community and the dominant American culture. Clients may experience intragroup marginalization, or feelings of rejection from members of their heritage culture for adopting values or customs from the dominant culture, which can lead to acculturative stress (Castillo et al., 2012; Castillo et al., 2008). For example, South Asian clients may experience pressure to speak their heritage language and may feel ostracized by their family and community if they are unable to speak it. Likewise, if a client speaks English with an accent or does not speak English well, they may also experience ostracization and discrimination from members of

the host culture (i.e., White Americans). Furthermore, clients may experience pressure to conform to American customs and values, such as spending more time with friends than with family members in the evenings or weekends and may feel isolated from their American peers when they do not. In a similar vein, South Asian adolescents may experience shame and isolation from their heritage culture if they practice American customs, such as casual dating or engaging in sex before marriage, or express American values, such as prioritizing individual desires when making decisions rather than familial desires (Zaidi et al, 2016). These experiences of microaggressions and systemic racism over time can lead to racial trauma and therefore should be intervened by clinicians, both on an individual and institutional level (Bryant-Davis, 2007; Nadal et al., 2019). By asking clients about their experiences with power, safety, and racial trauma within the United States, therapists can help clients to develop a sense of pride and community in their bicultural identity. Developing connections to family and ethnic community, pride in one's heritage, finding sources of social support, and expressing gratitude for the opportunities that are available to clients due to immigrating have all been demonstrated to be beneficial for mental health outcomes and may help clients cope with acculturative stress (Tummala-Narra et al., 2016).

Mental health practitioners should prioritize understanding their South Asian clients' beliefs about family honor and how they impact the rejection clients experience based on how they maintain heritage culture customs and values while adopting American cultural customs and values and clients' feelings of sadness, hopelessness, and loneliness. Therapists should assess how clients understand their duty to maintain their family's honor and how this impacts their social behaviors (i.e., dating and relationships), substance use behaviors, clothing choices, and academic and career choices (Zaidi et al., 2016). For example, South Asian college students

often hide their romantic relationships from others until they are engaged in order to prevent rumors from spreading about them that may hurt their family's image within the community. Additionally, many South Asian students experience pressure to pursue a career that would bring honor to their family name, typically a career path that requires higher education and may lead to upward social mobility (e.g., doctor, lawyer, engineer). Living in an individualistic host culture can contribute to client's behaviors and beliefs lying in contrast with the behaviors and beliefs expected of them in their heritage culture (Bashir & Tang, 2018). Therapists should also assess the role that shame plays in their clients' understanding of their behaviors. Since many South Asian parents use shame to encourage their children to conform to their expectations (Naeem et al., 2015), many South Asian college students may feel shame when they do not meet expectations to uphold family honor. This pressure to maintain family honor may contribute to a client's symptoms of depression due to stress and shame associated with these beliefs. Therapy with this population should consist of helping clients to navigate these expectations in a way that is consistent with their own beliefs and goals.

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APPENDIX A TABLES AND FIGURES

Table 1
Bivariate Correlations and Descriptive Statistics for the Study Variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Depression	-	.34**	-.04	-.06	.04	-.07
2. Acculturative Stress		-	-.09	-.09	.19**	.04
3. Familial Support			-	.83**	.50**	.57**
4. Familial Interconnectedness				-	.49**	.58**
5. Familial Honor					-	.65**
6. Subjugation of Self for Family						-
Means	54.99	54.30	23.54	20.39	12.36	10.56
Standard Deviations	12.71	16.81	4.46	3.65	3.40	2.62

*p < 0.05 level, **p < 0.01

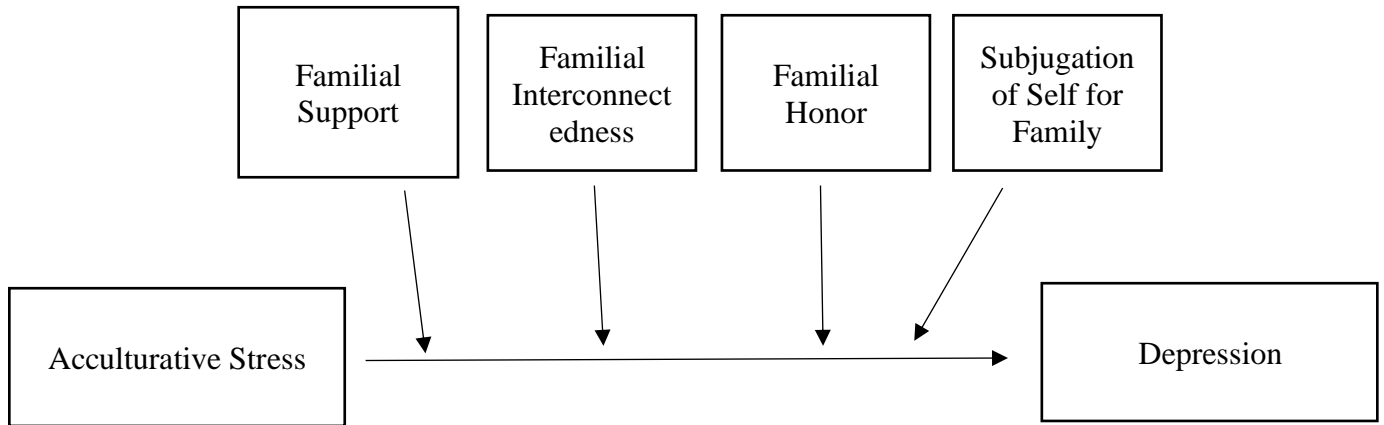


Figure 1. Proposed model.

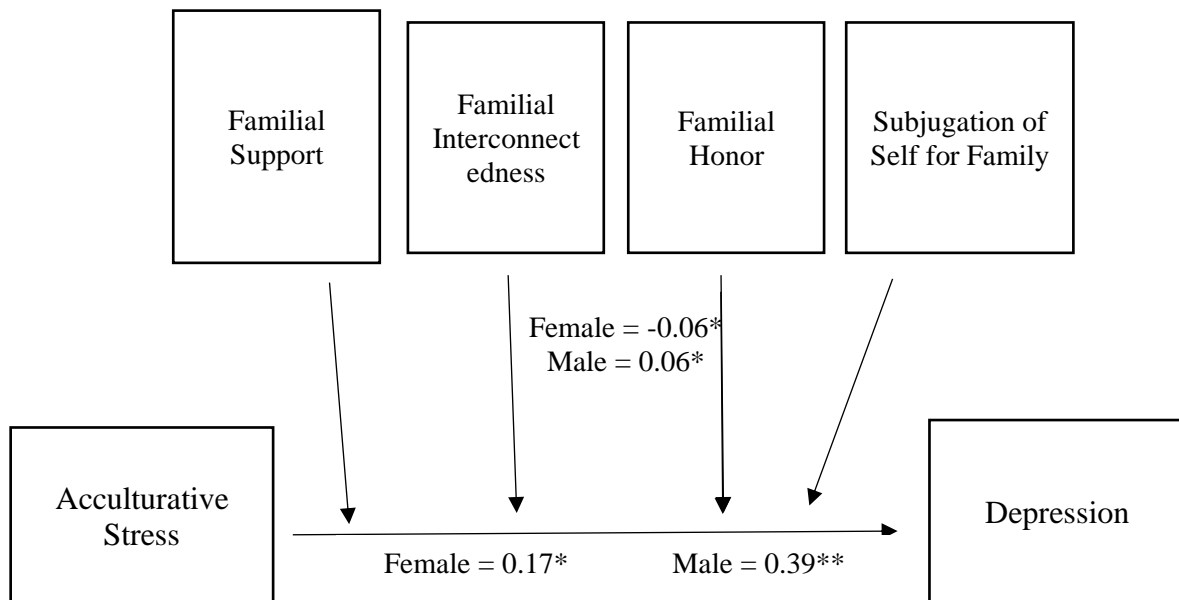


Figure 2. Statistical model with significant relationships. *p < 0.05 level, **p < 0.01