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Derek Rohde
derek.rohde@mail.waldenu.edu

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Latino Immigrant Stressors, Emotional Exhaustion, Coping Resources and Work-Related Outcomes

Derek Rohde
Walden University

There currently is a paucity of research examining Latinos immigrants in the workforce and the role of occupational and economic stress on worker outcomes. Recent research supports a positive psychological approach to understanding stress and coping. Proactive coping, social support, and optimism are part of this trend and have been shown to buffer against the deleterious effects of stress-related emotional exhaustion. This research examined the relationships of occupational and economic stress with emotional exhaustion, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions. Additionally, analyses examined the ability of positive psychological resources to buffer the effects of stress in 133 Latino immigrants working in low-wage positions for a Southern California restaurant chain. Path analyses found emotional exhaustion mediated the relationships between stress and job outcomes. Positive coping resources showed significant main effects on emotional exhaustion, but failed to moderate the relationship. Results suggest that stressors affecting immigrants can lead to emotional exhaustion impacting work-related outcomes. Further, individuals with greater positive psychological resources may be more resilient to the effects of stress.

Demographic changes in the United States are influencing its workforce composition and environment. The 2010 decennial census found that the Latino population accounted for the majority (56%) of the nation's growth since 2000 (Passel, Cohn, & Lopez, 2012). Latinos represent the largest immigrant group in the United States and are the fastest growing population (Motel & Patten, 2012), with this group accounting for 16% of the overall population (Humes, Jones, & Ramirez, 2011). The state of California has the largest Latino population in the country, with the city of Los Angeles containing the highest number of Latino workers of any county in the United States (U.S. Census Bureau, 2014). Current labor force participation rate projections from the Bureau of Labor Statistics suggest that the labor force will become more diverse in the future. Latino workers are projected to increase their presence in the workforce and by 2020 account for 19% of the United States labor

Author info: Correspondence should be sent to: Dr. Derek Rohde,
derek.rohde@mail.waldenu.edu

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force (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015). Income for Latino workers has not kept up with that of other racial and ethnic categories. Latino workers are still the lowest paid among all U.S. workers. In 2011, 50% of full-time workers earned at least \$549 per week, which was only 71% of the median income earned by White workers (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015). Education and language barriers undoubtedly contribute to earning differences. Latino immigrants represent one of the United States' least educated minority populations (Fry, 2010). Language acquisition and proficiency may also play a role in earning disparities as only 38% of Latino immigrants are able to carry on a conversation in English, while only 37% report that they are able to read materials printed in the English language (Taylor, Lopez, Martínez, & Velasco, 2012). In addition to earning a low wage, Latinos on average have larger families to care for in comparison to non-Hispanic Whites (California Senate Office of Research, 2014).

Research in Los Angeles, California has found that Latino workers are greatly overrepresented in low-skill low-pay occupations such as restaurant service positions (Montero-Sieburth & Melendez, 2007). In 2014, nearly 25% of the employees in the leisure and hospitality industry were of Latino ethnicity (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015). Most of the workers in this category have little or no access to health insurance or other benefits, and wages are below the median. Reasons for the large representation in low-skill and low-pay occupations may be related to immigrant acculturation issues. For many immigrants, the process of culture change is not an easy one and may lead to considerable difficulties which can produce stress (Bhagat, 1985). These stressors may include discrimination, language barriers, educational deficiencies, lack of financial resources, loss of social and family resources, frustration with low income, as well as role conflict, struggles between traditional values, and values found with the host culture (Hovey, 2000). Stressors linked to the process of acculturation, can be termed acculturative stress.

Acculturative Stress

From a theoretical standpoint, acculturative stress can be viewed through a lens that examines the opportunities, demands, and constraints faced by the immigrant (Bhagat & London, 1999). In this context, opportunity stressors relate to the immigrants' ability to achieve at a greater level than what would be possible in their home country. For the immigrant, opportunity stress arises as the individual begins to realize that these opportunities are not always easy to obtain. To capitalize on opportunities, the immigrant may have to learn a new language, deal with discrimination, and/or take a job that he or she may be overqualified for due to language barriers (Bhagat & London, 1999; Dale et al., 2005;

Kossek, Meece, Barratt, Prince, & Poelmans, 2005). With opportunities come demands.

Demand stressors refer to work-related conditions that might serve as barriers to immigrants realizing their objectives. Typically, immigrants are concentrated in certain geographic locations and are employed in specific occupations. The choice for these geographic locations and occupations may be due to language proficiency, immigration status, and whether or not they have migrated to the U.S. previously (Oliveira, Wooster, & Paruszkiewicz, 2015). Latino immigrants are frequently found in low-paying, low-skilled jobs that are less than desirable to the Anglo majority. Typically, these jobs are found through social networks that produce job enclaves or segregated occupations that become labeled as Latino immigrant occupations (Catanzarite, 2002). For example, Latinos are frequently found in demanding jobs such as migrant farm work (Kossek et al., 2005), restaurant employee (Montero-Sieburth & Melendez, 2007), and poultry processing (Grzywacz et al., 2007). These low-skilled, low-paying positions typically offer little opportunity for advancement and frequently require immigrants to work substandard shifts (Grzywacz et al., 2007) and long hours (Kossek et al., 2005). Demand stressors such as working in these low-pay occupations have been shown to have residual effects on family and other resources which are particularly stressful to the immigrant (Cervantes, 1992). For many immigrant workers, low wages require working two jobs or extended hours. These occupational demands deplete personal resources such as free time as well as physical and psychological energy.

Constraint stressors refer to those that hold immigrants back from merging with the mainstream culture and integrating into society. For many Latinos, education, language, and work skills are a major constraint. Recent census data on Latino immigrants show that more than 50% have less than a 9th grade education (Fry, 2010) and 62% speak less than fluent English (Taylor, Lopez, Martínez, & Velasco, 2012). Other constraints affecting Latino immigrants have to do with their poverty and its relation to their low-paying occupations. Latinos are the lowest paid among all classes of workers (Department of Labor, 2012), with low-pay constraining other areas of life functioning, such as educational and family resources. Cervantes (1992) discusses specific occupational and economic stressors that can be conceptualized under the heading of acculturative stress and are represented by opportunity, demand, and constraint stressors. These three factors will influence the process of cognitive appraisal (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) thus affecting how an individual interprets the stressors as well as potentially impacting mental health and job-related outcomes. Previous research has demonstrated the effects of acculturative stress on mental health

(Cervantes, 1992; Cervantes et al., 2013; Escobar, 1998; Escobar et al., 2000; Vega et al., 1998). To date, there is a paucity of research looking at Latino immigrants in the workplace, acculturative stress, and the effects of stress on job-related outcomes.

Acculturative Stress and Occupational Outcomes

Immigrant occupational outcomes can be significantly affected by acculturative stress (Bhagat & London, 1999). There is little research addressing acculturative stress in the human resource and organizational stress fields as it relates to immigrants and their occupational concerns (Bhagat, 1985; Bhagat & London, 1999; Cheng & Thatchenkery, 1997). For instance, Bass (2003) found that acculturative stress fully mediated the relationship between self-esteem, job satisfaction, and turnover in Mexican migrant workers. Other research by Hovey and Magana (2002) found that acculturative stress had a significant influence on the prediction of anxiety and depression in a sample of migrant farm workers. Bhagat and London (1999) provided a theoretical model linking acculturative stress and occupational outcomes without specifying any variables that might mediate the relationship. Their model theoretically illustrates the importance of acculturative stress and its relationship to occupational (job) satisfaction, occupational self-esteem, and commitment or withdrawal tendencies to one's occupation. The relationship between acculturative stress and occupational outcomes described in Bhagat and London's (1999) model has the potential to be mediated by stress-related variables such as the Emotional Exhaustion dimension of the Burnout construct (Maslach, 1993). Opportunity, demand, and constraint stressors may influence the etiology of emotional exhaustion. Low-pay, demanding schedules, little opportunity for advancement, and work overload, related to the process of acculturation are some of the most cited reasons for emotional exhaustion and occupational burnout (Schaufeli & Buunk, 2003).

Emotional Exhaustion

Burnout is defined as a psychological condition manifesting as emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment (Maslach & Jackson, 1984). While the original research on burnout focused on workers in the human service industry, later elaborations have expanded the construct to include all occupations. Maslach's (1982, 1993) original multidimensional model and measure of burnout has been used extensively in the burnout literature (Schaufeli & Enzmann, 1998). Nonetheless, there are a number of researchers who have called into question this three-component conceptualization of burnout (Gaines & Jermier, 1983; Garden, 1989; Koeske & Koeske,

1989, 1993; Moore, 2000; Shirom, 2003). A number of alternate conceptualizations of burnout have been proposed (for comprehensive reviews see Schaufeli & Enzmann, 1998; Shirom, 2003). These alternative models differ in a number of ways; however, what has emerged as a consistent factor is the emotional exhaustion component suggesting that it is a primary and central component to the experience of burnout (Halbesleben & Bowler, 2007). Emotional exhaustion captures the burnout dimension that is most relevant to Latino immigrants who work in highly demanding jobs. Exhaustion from job demands and strenuous work has been shown to be a relevant stress factor for Latino workers particularly as it has the potential to create conflict with other important resources (Grzywacz et al., 2007). Workload and time pressure have been shown to account for approximately 25% to 50% of the variance in the Emotional Exhaustion subscale (Schaufeli & Enzmann, 1998). Research in the hospitality industry, has found that emotional exhaustion led to job dissatisfaction, a reduction in organizational commitment, and a high degree of turnover intentions (Karatepe & Uludag, 2007). However, emotional exhaustion and its relationship to immigrant acculturative stress and job outcomes has not been studied.

Coping with Stress Through Personal Resources

Models of acculturative stress point to the importance of moderating factors such as appraisal, coping, social support, and attitudes on the impact of acculturative stress (Berry, 2006; Bhagat & London, 1999; Williams & Berry, 1991). Personal and social resources can be invested to help with the process of resisting stress (Hobfoll, 2001). Proactive coping (Greenglass, 2005), social support (Halbesleben, 2006), and optimism (Scheier et al., 1986) have all been shown to have an effect on the relationship between stress and outcome variables. This discussion now looks at the resources of proactive coping, social support, and optimism, and their potential to buffer the effects on the relationship between acculturative stress and stress-related outcomes.

Proactive Coping

A great deal of the conventional coping literature has focused on how people cope with past or present events (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2004). Recently, coping researchers have begun to examine ways that individuals can cope with future oriented events. Dewe and Cooper (2007) found that future-oriented proactive coping is a recent direction that is developing strong research-backed support. Traditionally, coping has been conceptualized as a reactive process, or something one does in response to a threat or stressor. Difficult situations are perceived as

threats or losses. Proactive coping differs as it is more future-oriented and focused on:

an effort to build up general resources that facilitate promotion towards challenging goals and personal growth. In proactive coping, people have a vision. They see risks, demands, and opportunities in the far future, but they do not appraise these as threats, harm, or loss. Rather, they perceive difficult situations as challenges. Coping becomes goal management instead of risk management (Schwarzer, 2000, p. 349).

A proactive coping style may be reminiscent of or similar to what Comas-Diaz (1997) described as a striving attitude, found in Latino immigrants, towards success through work that may buffer occupational-related stress. This may be reflected in the ability of an individual to construe stressors through a long-term vision for the future, defining them as challenges to be met on the path towards personal growth and goal achievement. Skills inherent in a proactive coping style are those of mental planning, goal setting, organization, and cognitive rehearsal or mental simulation (Aspinwall & Taylor, 1997). Greenglass (2002) distinguishes three main features of proactive coping: "(1) it integrates planning and preventive strategies with proactive self-regulatory goal management, (2) it integrates proactive goal attainment with identification and utilization of social resources, and (3) it utilizes proactive emotional coping for self-regulatory goal management" (p. 41). Connecting the proactive coping construct to Latino immigrant experience, Infante and Lamond (2003) describe personal resilience factors that help Latino immigrants manage adversity and cope with acculturative stress. They argue that Latinos have a strong belief in their personal ability to create positive change in their life, bolstered by a sense of optimism and autonomy. This serves as a basic resource that, when combined with social support, allows the individual to acquire skills as well as adapt to demands in the host culture. These resources may moderate the relationship between acculturative stress and outcomes to the extent that they are present in the Latino worker. This striving towards personal growth and resources acquisition is synonymous with the proactive coping premise.

A key feature of proactive coping is that it often draws on the external resources of others in the form of social support (Greenglass, Fiksenbaum, & Eaton, 2006). Social support can provide practical, informational, and emotional resources to help an individual manage stress (Greenglass, 2002). Social support has been shown to be positively associated with proactive coping (Greenglass, Fiksenbaum, & Eaton, 2006) and negatively associated with emotional exhaustion (Halbesleben, 2006).

Social Support

Social support, referring to the presence of social and cultural means that provide support to the acculturating individual, can be viewed as one of the most studied factors in the literature affecting acculturative stress (Williams & Berry, 1991). Due to a strong group and family orientation, social support can be an important coping resource for Latinos dealing with stressful situations (Hovey & Magana, 2002a). The positive effects of social support may increase with the development of social support networks and worsen the effects of stress in their absence (Hawley, Chavez, & St. Romain, 2007). Research on acculturative stress, social support, and stress-related outcome variables with Mexican immigrants has found social support to be an important variable in helping to understand acculturative stress and its potential negative effects (Hovey, 2000a; Hovey & Magana, 2000; Hovey & Magana, 2002b).

There are two ways that social support may operate. The first is that social support provides a means for the individual to widen his or her pool of resources. Social support can provide a major route to resource pools that are larger than those directly possessed by the individual or by replacing lost resources. The second way that social support may operate is by linking individuals to important others through their identity (Hobfoll & Shirom, 2001). People often define themselves in terms of who they are in relation to others. Immigrant enclaves provide a source of identity and provide valuable social support, resources, and counsel (Ward, 1996). Hovey (1999), with a sample of Mexican immigrants, found a moderating effect for social support suggesting that it may play a significant role in helping immigrants cope with acculturative stressors.

Hobfoll (2001) discusses the concept of resources caravans, acting both in the life-span, as well as the immediate sense, where the presence of one resource may be linked to having others. For instance, in a stressful situation, having an optimistic outlook and a sense of mastery is likely to be related to the availability of social support. Optimism has been shown to be positively related to the seeking of social support (Scheier et al., 1986). It can be thought of as part of a proactive coping style with the individual utilizing proactive strategies, evaluating difficulties in a positive light, and then appraising them as a challenge, rather than as a threat (Uskul & Greenglass, 2005). Freedy and Hobfoll (1994) found that the presence of more than one resource significantly aided in the reduction of psychological distress. Latinos who possess strong resources may show superior resistance to acculturative stress.

Dispositional Optimism

Dispositional optimism can be understood as the general expectancy that outcomes or events in the future will be good, and negative or bad

life events will be minimal (Scheier & Carver, 1985). Optimism is an important variable in the study of stress, coping, and health-related outcome variables (Nes & Segerstrom, 2006; Romero, Carvajal, Volle, & Orduna, 2007; Uskul & Greenglass, 2005). Infante and Lamond (2003) have argued that optimism is a personal resource and/or resilience factor that can help Latino immigrants adapt to the demands of a new country. Their argument is based on the results of a study by the Institute for Mental Health Initiatives that looked at resilience in four Latino populations. Evidence indicated that personal resources such as optimism, helped Latino immigrants overcome constraints and adapt in the host culture. Stress due to acculturation has been shown to be significantly related to depression and less optimism in Latino students (Romero et al., 2007). For acculturating Mexican immigrants, a strong social support system and a sense of optimism for the future leads to minimal anxiety (Hovey & Magan, 2002).

Reasons for optimism's buffering effect may be explained by meta-analytic research, which found that optimism leads to more adaptive versus maladaptive styles of coping (Nes & Segerstrom, 2006). Specifically, optimism was found to lead to more approach and less avoidance coping in both problem-focused and emotion-focused strategies. This can lead to effective coping in both controllable and uncontrollable stressors through the use of the coping strategy that is most adaptive for the situation being encountered. The results of the meta-analysis "are consistent with the conceptual basis for optimism, in which positive expectancies for the future lead to engagement and striving rather than disengagement and giving up" (Nes & Segerstrom, 2006, p. 245). Positive striving is consistent with proactive coping where individuals with higher levels of psychosocial resources, are more likely to cope proactively (Aspinwall & Taylor, 1997).

Personal resources clearly have the potential to impact perceptions of acculturative stress and the etiology of stress-related outcomes such as emotional exhaustion. To the extent that Latino immigrants possess strong pools of personal and social resources, the greater their ability may be to withstand the effects of acculturation stress. This discussion now turns to the current study and the examination of specific occupational and economic stressors pertinent to low-wage earning Latino immigrants. These stressors, conceptualized under the heading of acculturative stressors, are faced by many Latino immigrants, and are predicted to influence emotional exhaustion and occupational outcomes.

Changes in workforce demographics have made the study of occupational stress, ethnic diversity, and job-related outcomes of paramount importance (Rodriguez-Calcagno & Brewer, 2005). This same sentiment was put forth over three decades ago by Ford (1985), who

spoke to the issue of ethnic origin and stress as being the least studied of all the individual differences that may moderate job stress responses. Understanding personal resources and their potential to buffer the effects of stress in immigrant populations is important as the job-related stress and coping literatures have focused little attention on immigrant workers.

The current study sought to fill a gap in the literature as well as extend research findings on Latino immigrants to a work-related context by examining research questions related to Latino immigrants, acculturative stress, occupational-related outcomes, and personal protective resources. Specifically, this study addressed the following research questions:

Is occupational and economic acculturative stress related to the job outcomes of emotional exhaustion, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions?

Does emotional exhaustion mediate the relationship between occupational and economic acculturative stress, job satisfaction and turnover intentions?

Do personal resources, such as proactive coping, social support, and optimism, buffer the effects of acculturative stress that result in emotional exhaustion?

METHOD

Participant Demographics

One hundred and thirty-three Latino immigrant workers of primarily Mexican descent (87.4%) participated in this study (83 men and 50 women). With respect to time in the United States, more than half of the respondents reported living in this country for ten years or less. More than three-quarters of the respondents were under 30 years of age, with the remainder ranging from 31 to 50 years of age. The great majority of the respondents (74%) choose the Spanish over English language version of the survey, suggesting a less acculturated sample.

Procedure

This study surveyed a sample of Latino immigrants living across the city of Los Angeles, California, and employed with a Mexican restaurant franchise. The restaurant chain employs a large number of Latino workers and has multiple locations across the United States and the city of Los Angeles. Participants were drawn from 12 franchise locations in Los Angeles, California under a single ownership. All materials were translated from English to Spanish except where translated versions of materials already existed. Participants were given the choice of taking the survey in either English or Spanish, with survey data collected via pencil and paper format. Threats to internal validity such as instrument

order or testing effects were controlled for through a within-restaurant randomized presentation of the individual scales used in this research.

Measures

Occupational and economic acculturative stress. For the current study, the Occupational and Economic subscale of the *Hispanic Stress Inventory* (HSI) was used to measure a facet of acculturative stress (Cervantes, Padilla, & Salgado de Snyder, 1991). The Occupational and Economic subscale is comprised of 17 items and measured on a 5-point scale ranging from “not at all stressful” to “very stressful.” Sample items include the following: “My income has not been sufficient to support my family or myself”; “Not knowing enough English has limited me on my job”; and “I did not get the job I wanted because I did not have the proper skills.” The scores for individual items are summed, with higher scores indicating greater stress. Construct validity for the instrument was demonstrated by Cervantes et al. (1991) for Latino immigrants through the use of appropriate factor analytic techniques. The Occupational and Economic subscale of the HSI emerged as the first factor of a five-factor solution for the immigrant population. Criterion-related validity was demonstrated through correlations with depression, anxiety, somatization, self-esteem, and personal competence. With respect to the Occupational and Economic subscale, Cronbach’s alpha was at .91. The test-retest coefficient was .79 for the Occupational and Economic subscale (Cervantes et al. 1991).

Emotional exhaustion. This variable was assessed with the *Maslach Burnout Inventory-General Survey* (MBI-GS) (Maslach et al., 1996). The Emotional Exhaustion subscale of this survey is comprised of five items and measured on a 7-point frequency scale ranging from “never” to “every day.” Example items from this scale include: “I feel emotionally drained from my work”; “I feel used up at the end of the day”; and “I feel frustrated by my job.” Scores of individual items are summed with higher scores indicating greater levels of emotional exhaustion. The *Maslach Burnout Inventory Manual* reports high internal consistency (Cronbach’s alpha = .90 for Emotional Exhaustion (Maslach et al., 1996).

Job satisfaction. Participants completed a job satisfaction scale of five-items tapping into five dimensions of the satisfaction construct that are widely recognized. This scale measured the degree of satisfaction with the work itself, coworkers, supervision, promotional opportunities, and pay (Price & Mueller, 1986). The following five questions were taken from their article: “ ‘All in all how satisfied are you with the work itself of your job?’; ‘All in all how satisfied are you with your coworkers?’; ‘All in all how satisfied are you with the supervision?’; ‘All in all how satisfied are you with the promotional opportunities?’; and

‘All in all how satisfied are you with the pay?’” (p. 488). Satisfaction items were measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from “very unsatisfied” to “very satisfied.” Items are added and computed into averages for each participant with higher scores indicating greater satisfaction. Wright and Cropanzano (1998) reported a Cronbach alpha reliability for this scale at .75.

Turnover intention. Turnover intention was assessed with a single-item measure asking, “How often have you seriously considered quitting your current job in the past 30 days?” modified from Spector, Dwyer, and Jex (1988). Responses were measured on a 6-point Likert scale ranging from “never” to “extremely often.” This measure has been used in several previous studies, has been shown to be related significantly to both satisfaction and turnover, and has also been used with cross-national samples (Spector et al., 2007).

Proactive coping. The Proactive Coping Scale of the *Proactive Coping Inventory* (PCI; Greenglass, Schwarzer, & Taubert, 1999) was used in the current study. The PCS is comprised of 14 items and measured on a 4-point Likert scale from “not at all true” to “completely true.” Examples of items from the scale include: “I am a take-charge person”; “After attaining a goal, I look for another, more challenging one”; and “Despite numerous setbacks, I usually succeed in getting what I want.” Individual items on the PCS were added and then computed into averages with higher scores indicating greater proactive coping. The PCS has a reported Cronbach’s alpha of .85 and construct validity has been demonstrated through proper principal component analyses (Greenglass, 2002). The scale has been shown to be a relevant measure with immigrant populations (Uskul & Greenglass, 2005), with both English and Spanish translations available from the authors.

Social support. The *Personal Resource Questionnaire* (PRQ85) Part 2 (Weinert, 1987) was used to measure perceived levels of social support in this study. While there are many measures of social support throughout the social science literature, the PRQ85 Part 2 was chosen due to its extensive use in research focusing on Latino immigrants (Hovey, 1999, 2000a, 2000b; Hovey & King, 1997). The scale has been previously translated into Spanish and consists of 25 items measured on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.” Examples of items include the following: “There is someone I feel close to who makes me feel secure”; “Others let me know that they enjoy working with me on jobs, committees, projects”; and “There are people who are available if I needed help over an extended period of time.” Weinert (1987) has demonstrated sufficient construct validity with the PRQ85 Part 2 through factor analytic and correlation analyses, and it was shown to be a distinct construct from anxiety and depression, therefore

demonstrating discriminant validity. Scores on the PRQ85 Part 2 are summed into a total score that can range from 25 to 175, with higher scores indicating higher levels of perceived social support.

Optimism. Optimism in this study was measured by the revised *Life Orientation Test* (LOT-R) (Scheier, Carver, & Bridges, 1994). The LOT-R is a six-item scale (plus four “filler” items) measured on a 5-point Likert scale that ranges from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.” Examples of items include: “In uncertain times, I usually expect the best”; “Overall, I expect more good things to happen to me than bad”; and “I’m always optimistic about my future.” Individual items on this scale are summed with higher scores indicating greater levels of optimism. Scheier et al., (1994), conducted a principal component factor analysis that produced a one-factor solution for the six items. Cronbach’s alpha for the six items was .78. Test-retest reliability at 28 months was .79, thus showing that the LOT-R is stable over time. Convergent and discriminant validity were demonstrated with measures of: Self-mastery, State-Trait Anxiety, Self-esteem, and two measures of Neuroticism. No known Spanish translations of the LOT-R were available and this measure was translated into Spanish by a professional language translation company.

RESULTS

Prior to conducting analyses to answer the research questions, the HSI results were examined for the five most frequently reported occupational and economic stressors. The predominate stressors for this immigrant sample had to do with pressure to provide more things for ones’ family (66%), as well as feeling that the rhythm of life has changed due to work (65%). Additionally, a lack of money from working in a low-wage occupation makes it difficult to get more education (62%), and support oneself or a family (59%). Financial issues resulted in (56%) reporting stress due to having to work away from their families. Table 1 shows the top 5 stressors along with the percentage reporting the stressor and item means.

Statistical Analyses

All research questions were statistically addressed in Mplus through correlations, path analysis, and moderated regression. Following the suggestions of Klem (2005) for reporting path analysis results, the standardized regression coefficients (β) are utilized to report results and significance levels.

Correlations between all of the measures included in this study, as well as means, standard deviations, and reliabilities, are presented in

Table 2. All of the measures reached acceptable levels of internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha).

TABLE 1 The Top 5 Occupational & Economic Stressors

Question	Latino Immigrants (N=133)	
	Item Score	% Reporting This Stressor
I have put pressure on myself to provide more things for my family	3.72	66 (N = 89)
I have felt that due to my work the rhythm of my life has changed	3.39	65 (N = 87)
The lack of money has made it difficult for me to get more education	3.50	62 (N = 83)
My income has not been sufficient to support my family or myself	3.34	59 (N = 79)
Because of money problems, I have had to work away from my family	3.71	56 (N = 74)

Research question one. This question asked if occupational and economic acculturative stress is related to the job outcomes of emotional exhaustion, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions. Relationships were addressed through simple Person *r* correlations. As was expected, occupational and economic acculturative stress was significantly related to the job outcomes of emotional exhaustion $r = .44, p < .01$, job satisfaction $r = -.28, p < .01$, and turnover intentions $r = .35, p < .01$.

Mediation Analyses

Baron and Kenny (1986) state that a realistic or prudent approach is to examine mediators in terms of the significance of their indirect effects, rather than in terms of complete elimination of the relationship between the exogenous and endogenous variables. This indirect effect is defined as the reduction of the effect of the predictor on the criterion produced by the mediator. In order to test the significance of the mediation effect, the Sobel (1982) test based on the standard errors was applied. The Sobel approach tests the significance of the mediator by dividing the indirect effect by its standard error and then comparing the result to a normal standard distribution. The Sobel test is the most commonly used standard error approach and is the most recommended (MacKinnon, Lockwood,

Hoffman, West, & Sheets, 2002). Mplus uses the Sobel (1982) procedure to test the significance of the indirect effects and is reported below.

TABLE 2 Correlations, Means, SDs & Reliabilities (N = 133)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1 HSI	-						
2 LOT-R	-.20*	-					
3 PCI	-.12	.34**	-				
4 PRQ	-.05	.15	.44**	-			
5 EE	.44**	-.17	-.21**	-.14	-		
6 JS	-.27**	.22*	.35**	.35**	-.27**	-	
7 TI	.36**	-.23*	-.28**	-.18*	.44**	-.40**	-
Sum/ Mean	36.8	21.1	3.28	126.3	2.35	3.59	2.39
SD	16.1	3.89	0.41	21.18	1.46	0.78	1.45
α	.89	.52	.73	.86	.84	.78	NA

* Correlation is significant at the .05 (2-tailed)

** Correlation is significant at the .01 (2-tailed)

NA = Not applicable. Reliabilities were not generated for the one-item scale Turnover Intention.

Research question two. To answer this question a path analysis was employed to examine whether emotional exhaustion mediates the relationship between occupational and economic acculturative stress, job satisfaction and turnover intentions. Two separate path models were entered into Mplus, and Baron and Kenny's (1986) four-step process was applied with the following results:

Step one: Shows that the predictor occupational and economic acculturative stress is correlated with the outcomes through path analysis. The requirements for this step were passed for both job satisfaction ($\beta = -.22, p < .05$) and turnover intentions ($\beta = .21, p < .05$).

Step two: Shows that the predictor occupational and economic acculturative stress is correlated with the mediator (emotional exhaustion). In this step, the mediator is treated as an outcome. Path analysis shows that the requirements for this step were passed ($\beta = .44, p < .01$).

Step three: Shows that the mediator (emotional exhaustion) affects the outcome variables (job satisfaction and turnover intentions) while controlling for other variables. In this step, job satisfaction and turnover were entered as the criterion variables and both occupational and economic acculturative stress and emotional exhaustion were entered as predictors. This step examines the effect of the mediator variable (emotional exhaustion) on the outcome variables (job satisfaction and turnover intentions), while controlling for the predictor (occupational and economic acculturative stress). The results of the path analyses show that this step was passed. The effect of emotional exhaustion (mediator) on the criterion variables, controlling for occupational and economic acculturative stress (predictor) was significant for both job satisfaction ($\beta = -.19, p < .05$) and turnover intentions ($\beta = .38, p < .001$).

Step four: This step establishes that the indirect effect of emotional exhaustion completely mediates the relationship between the predictor and the criterion variables. Complete mediation would be indicated when the effect (beta coefficient) of occupational and economic acculturative stress on job satisfaction and turnover intentions is zero while controlling for emotional exhaustion. Complete mediation was not found in testing this step for either model. In both cases, partial mediation would be indicated as the effect of occupational and economic acculturative stress on job satisfaction and turnover intentions was reduced when the effect of emotional exhaustion was controlled for. Specifically, the effect of economic acculturative stress on job satisfaction was reduced $\Delta\beta .15$ from $\beta = -.22$ to $\beta = -.07$, and the effect of economic acculturative stress on turnover was reduced $\Delta\beta .06$ from $\beta = .21$ to $\beta = .15$. The Sobel (1982) test for the total indirect effect of emotional exhaustion for both models was statistically significant, $p < .05$. Emotional exhaustion partially mediated the relationship in both models.

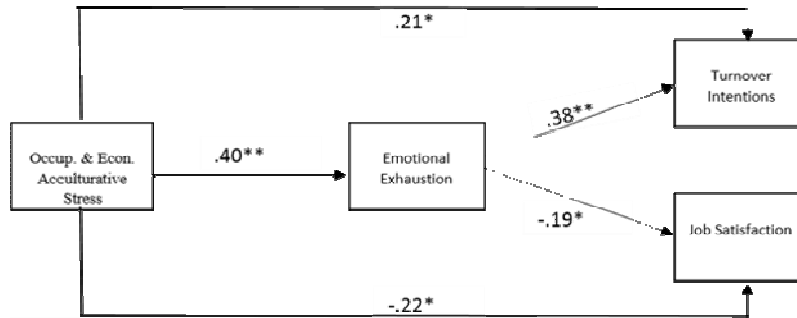


FIGURE 1. Mediation models showing standardized path coefficients
 $*p < .05$, $**p < .01$

Moderated Regression

According to Baron and Kenny (1986), a variable acts as a moderator when it influences the directionality and or strength of the relationship between the predictor and criterion variable.

Moderation analyses in this study followed the procedural guidelines described by Aiken and West (1991). Three moderating variables were examined independently, assessing their effect on the relationship between occupational and economic acculturative stress and emotional exhaustion. Two steps were taken in the moderated regression analysis. In step one, emotional exhaustion was entered into the regression equation as the criterion variable with occupational and economic acculturative stress and a moderating variable as the predictors. Step two entailed creating an interaction term with occupational and economic acculturative stress and each of the moderating variables independently. According to Baron and Kenny (1986), moderator effects are determined by the presence of a significant interaction between the predictor (occupational and economic acculturative stress) and the moderator, while controlling for the effect of the predictor and moderator. This interaction is assessed by the presence of a significant ΔR^2 . Three separate moderated regression analyses are described below. Predictor and moderator variables were centered prior to computing the interaction terms and conducting the analyses to reduce multicollinearity. Scatterplots for each of the regression analyses were generated to examine the assumptions of linearity and homoscedasticity and these showed no extreme violations of these assumptions. Results of all moderated regression analyses are reported in Table 3.

Research question three. To answer this question, moderated regression analyses were conducted to analyze whether personal

resources such as proactive coping, social support, and optimism buffer the effects of acculturative stress that may result in emotional exhaustion. The regression results show that none of the personal resource variables moderated the relationships between occupational and economic acculturative stress and emotional exhaustion. Both proactive coping and social support did, however, show significant main effects in the expected (negative) direction with emotional exhaustion after controlling for stress. Optimism failed to produce main or interaction effects. Participants who reported higher levels of proactive coping, social support exhibited experiencing less emotional exhaustion.

TABLE 3 Hierarchical Regression of Predictor, Moderator, & Interaction Variables with Emotional Exhaustion (*N* = 133)

Predictor	Burnout			
	<i>B</i>	β	<i>R</i> ²	ΔR^2
Proactive Coping				
Step 1: Main Effects			.24**	
a. Acculturative stress	.04	.43***		
b. Proactive coping	-.62	-.17***		
Step 2: Interaction			.23**	.003
Product term a x b	.02	.07***		
Social Support				
Step 1: Main Effects			.24***	
a. Acculturative stress	.04	.47***		
b. Social support	-.01	-.19**		
Step 2: Interaction			.25***	.007
Product term a x b	.00	-.05**		
Optimism				
Step 1: Main Effects			.21***	
a. Acculturative stress	.04	.43***		
b. Optimism	-.03	-.09		
Step 2: Interaction			.21**	.005
Product term a x b	.003	.10***		

Note: *B* values represent unstandardized regression coefficients. β values represent the standardized regression coefficients. *R*² denotes the amount of variance in burnout accounted for by the variables in each model. ΔR^2 reflects the incremental change in variance accounted for by the model. * *p*<.05, ** *p*<.01, *** *p*<.001 (two-tailed)

DISCUSSION

Latino immigrants are a growing part of the American population and workforce who have been underrepresented in the psychological

literature on stress and work related outcomes (Dunkel Schetter et al., 2013; Dunn & O'Brien, 2009). Recent research has shown that cumulative acculturation-related stress experiences can significantly impact the health of immigrant workers (McClure et al, 2015). Studies examining acculturation stress and the mechanisms in which stress can lead to maladaptive outcomes deserve widespread empirical investigation (Ortega, Rosenheck, Alegria, & Desai, 2000). This research has answered the call by studying Latino immigrant workers in an occupational setting. This study's focus on aspects related to the occupational and economic experience that may be *colored* by the acculturation process makes it unique. This acculturative coloring related to the occupational and economic experience can sometimes be subtle, and disentangling everyday general life stress from acculturative stress can be difficult. Negy, Schwartz, and Reig-Ferrer (2009) provide a cogent example to help illustrate this difference: "...although marital strife among immigrants may occur independently of acculturative pressure, relationship conflict may occur as a direct result of acculturation issues, such as when spouses disagree on their respective dyadic roles due to having discrepant levels of acculturation" (p. 256). Additionally, the stress of low pay and its effect on a person's ability to care for family members would be of concern to all cultures. Where these stressors depart from the general stress literature has to do with the pervasive exposure of stressors of this nature for Latino immigrant workers. When individuals receive lower rates of compensation because of questionable legal documentation or as a result of overt or subtle discrimination, these stressors fall into the acculturative stress camp (Cervantes, 1992). Hovey (2000) provides a list of potential acculturative stressors, which includes discrimination, language barriers, educational deficiencies, lack of financial resources, loss of social and family resources, frustration with low income, as well as role conflict and struggles between traditional values and those found with the host culture. This study examined these stressors in the context of an occupational and economic arena with a sample of un-accultured Latino immigrants as evidenced by the 73% of respondents who chose to answer the survey in Spanish rather than English. Looking at these acculturative stressors with a group of working and primarily un-accultured Latinos changes the tone of this study in comparison to the findings of other related research and identified emotional exhaustion as an outcome of acculturative stress. Emotional exhaustion plays a role in mediating occupational outcomes as well as mental health issues.

Stressors

Although opportunities for employment and educational resources are frequently more prevalent in the United States in comparison to Mexico and other Latin American regions, for the immigrant, acquiring these resources requires a great degree of effort and may have significant stress and health-related implications over time. Demand stressors can lead to resource loss, emotional exhaustion, and burnout at the individual level; and constraining factors can hold immigrants back (Hobfoll & Freedy, 1993). In the current study, demand stressors were high. Forty-two percent of the immigrants in this study worked more than 40 hours per week. Job demands on time have the potential to jeopardize family resources, and for the Latino worker this can be perceived as a threat or actual loss to culture (Kossek et al., 2005). In this study, 65% of the participants thought the rhythm of their life had changed due to the demanding aspect of their work. Work demands threatened time with family and social functions. Fifty-six percent of the participants worked away from their family due to money problems. Demands such as these have been shown to create work-family conflict in Latino workers (Grzywacz et al., 2007). Consistent with research conducted by Catanzarite (2002), Latino immigrant workers in this study put in long hours and were paid at, or slightly above, the state of California minimum wage, with the majority of the immigrants reporting that their income had not been sufficient to support their family.

Constraint stressors are those that hold the Latino back from merging or assimilating into the host culture, or from achieving their occupational or educational goals. In this study, 47% of the participants reported that not knowing enough English had limited them on the job, which was moderately stressful to these respondents. Language use is the most frequently assessed domain as a measure for acculturation (Zane & Mak, 2003). Choice of the Spanish language version of the survey may be suggestive of lower levels of acculturation for nearly three quarters of the participants.

Education and work skills can also be a major constraint. Fry (2010) identified Latino immigrants as being the least educated minority population in the United States with greater than 50% having less than a high school diploma. In this study, 25% of the respondents had less than a high school education, and 45% of the participants had a high school degree. Low pay is also a constraint that has implications for education. Sixty-two percent of the immigrants in the study indicated that low pay has made it difficult for them to get more education. Lopez (2009), found that nearly 90% of Latinos aged 16-25 felt that a college education was important for success in life. However, only half of that group plans to go to college, while the remainder had to cut their educations

short to support their families. Low pay constrains other areas as well, such as family functioning. The majority of the immigrants in this study indicated that their living conditions were not good for raising a family. These constraining factors represent causative spirals of loss (Hobfoll, 1998). In this sense, lacking one resource such as education, language fluency, or job skills can create a cycle of loss that keeps individuals in low-paying positions.

One particular constraining stressor that may have been at play in the current research, although it was not directly measured, is that of being an undocumented worker. Estimates for workers in the state of California suggest 2.67 million undocumented immigrants. The city of Los Angeles has a remarkable number of undocumented workers participating in the labor force (Hill & Hayes, 2015), with restaurants employing an estimated 15% of undocumented workers (Vogel, 2006). Undocumented immigrants have been shown to experience significantly higher levels of acculturative stress than the documented population, and this stress was shown to predict greater levels of psychological distress such as anxiety (Ramirez, 2005). The stress of being an undocumented worker can lead to fear which has been shown to constrain the immigrant's ability to seek out health-related medical services, leading to a potential deterioration in their health functioning (Berk & Schur, 2001).

Understanding psychological processes related to stress and how they influence the workplace is a challenging task. This study examined emotional exhaustion as a variable with great potential not only to be influenced by acculturative stress but also to have implications for work and health related outcomes. Occupational and economic acculturative stress was shown to have a significant relationship with emotional exhaustion in this study. Experiencing occupational and economic acculturative stress leads to emotional exhaustion and feelings of being depleted of emotional resources and/or being emotionally overextended. This study supports the theoretical writings of Bhagat and London (1999), who proposed that occupational outcomes can be influenced by the process of acculturation and the stressors associated with this process. This research introduced emotional exhaustion as a mediating variable into Bhagat and London's (1999) theoretical model and found that emotional exhaustion is a pathway through which stress associated with the acculturation process can exert its influence and impact workplace outcomes as well as psychological functioning and well-being as previous research has shown. While complete mediation was not found, significant indirect effects were observed.

Bhagat (1985), introduced the concept of *acculturative strain* which is a result of stress related to the process of acculturation and has implications for both individual and organizational outcomes. The results

of the present study have empirically identified a psychological construct (emotional exhaustion) that can be considered a form of acculturative strain. The acculturative stress-strain relationship identified in this research has implications for both occupational outcomes as well as individual mental health consequences.

Personal Resources and Stress Management

A search for resilience factors that might buffer the relationship between acculturative stress and burnout was the third goal of this study. This research took a positive psychology approach (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000) and looked at variables that had the potential to buffer the effects of acculturation stress on emotional exhaustion. Potential resilience factors were drawn from previous research on Latino immigrant groups and were supported by the conservation of resources theory which terms these resilience factors as *personal resources* that can be invested to help manage stress (Hobfoll, 2001).

Proactive coping. A buffering effect on stress was not detected for this variable. Detecting moderation is a challenging task. Many studies fail to reach the goal due to problems attributable to low power (Aguinis & Stone-Romero, 1997). Proactive coping did have a significant negative correlation with emotional exhaustion and the main effects in the moderated regression model were significant. Individuals in this study who proactively coped with stress were able to view risks, demands, and opportunities in the far future as challenges to be met, rather than appraise them as threat, harm, or loss. They were better at managing the effects of acculturative stress, which is consistent with previous theoretical research that proposes these suppositions (Bhagat & London, 1999; Williams & Berry, 1991).

One of the main features of proactive coping is the integration between proactive goal attainment and the identification and utilization of social resources. Social resources support a proactive coping style in that other individuals provide informational and emotional support that can help a person cope with stress (Greenglass, 2002). Findings of this study support this assertion in that proactive coping and social support showed a strong correlation with each other. This strong relationship has been shown in previous research to act in a synergistic manner producing a positive mental or emotional state, allowing the individual to experience less depression and absenteeism (Greenglass & Fiksenbaum, 2009). Infante and Lamond (2003) have argued that Latino immigrants possess strong personal resource pools that help them adapt to a new culture and manage the effects of acculturation stress. For the immigrants in this study, the ability to proactively cope with occupational and economic acculturative stress was associated with lower levels of

emotional exhaustion. These assertions are consistent with other research and theorists who ascertain that acculturating individuals who embody the characteristics found in a proactive coping style may be better able to weather the process of acculturation and the resultant stress (Comas-Diaz, 1997; Hovey & King, 1996; Williams & Berry, 1991).

Social support. Social support has been called one of the most comprehensive factors in the literature affecting acculturative stress (Williams & Berry, 1991). Based on the bivariate correlation, occupational and economic acculturative stress and social support had a very weak association. While main effects were significant in the moderation model with stress, social support, and emotional exhaustion, the bivariate correlation with social support and emotional exhaustion is considered small as suggested by Cohen (1998, 1992). Reasons for this lack of association with social support, stress, and emotional exhaustion may have their basis in meta-analytic research showing that sources of social support (work versus non-work) are differentially related to emotional exhaustion (Halbesleben, 2006). Work-related sources of support may be more related to emotional exhaustion because of their more direct influence on job-related demands.

The current study utilized the PRQ-85, which measured the perceived efficacy or effectiveness of social support rather than measure access to different support networks or types of support. Many of the items on the PRQ-85 have a social or familial focus (e.g., "My family lets me know that I am important for keeping the family running;" "Among my group of friends we do favors for each other;" and "There is someone who loves and cares about me"). Similar items on the PRQ-85, or the scale itself, may not tap into the type of social support (i.e., work-related) that is important in buffering stress and emotional exhaustion in the occupational context of the present study.

Optimism. As a resource stress-reducing variable, optimism showed little influence in its ability to buffer stress in this study. There were no moderating or main effects observed in the regression model. This is contrary to past research showing optimism's moderating effects and its strong negative influence on stress and emotional exhaustion (Chang, 1998; Chang et al., 2000; Hayes & Weathington, 2007). On a positive note, optimism did show a significant relationship to proactive coping. Optimism is part of a proactive coping style where the proactive person assesses stressors in the environment in a more positive light and views them as challenge rather than threat (Uskul & Greenglass, 2005). Within a proactive coping style, optimism may play a key role by influencing one's expectancy of goal attainment. Optimism in this respect can provide a sense of confidence about a goal's attainability. Only when individuals have sufficient confidence will they take action, and

sufficient confidence is required for sustained effort and striving (Carver & Scheier, 2001). Optimism has been called a “fuel or basic resource” that can help the immigrant adapt to demands in the new country (Infante & Lamond, 2003, p. 180). Previous research using meta-analysis found optimism to be positively associated with approach coping where individuals actively employ strategies to manage challenges in the environment (Nes & Segerstrom, 2006). Optimism’s approach style is related to and consistent with proactive coping where individuals view threat or challenge as an opportunity for personal growth (Schwarzer & Taubert, 2002).

The implications of this research for the organization as a whole can be found in the model tested and the results showing that occupational and economic acculturative stress is prevalent with this class of worker. In addition, emotional exhaustion may be influenced by factors that are not specifically related to the functions of one’s job. This research did not measure on-the-job stress per se, but rather looked at how aspects of acculturation related to the occupational and economic environment can influence job outcomes. Working in low-skill, low-pay positions, performing repetitive tasks, with little opportunity for advancement, might be stressful for any group of workers. However, organizations that employ immigrant workers should be aware of how the acculturation process and its inherent occupational and economic challenges for this group might have an effect on its bottom line through emotionally exhausted employees, reduced job satisfaction, and increased turnover.

Organizations that employ these workers may want to employ human-resource-based strategies to offset spirals of loss related to the effect of working in low-paying positions that limit one’s ability to enhance their educational and/or occupational skills. Employers looking to increase job satisfaction, and reduce turnover in their organizations may consider offering tuition reimbursement programs, as well as providing career paths for their employees. One of the top stressors reported in this study was a lack of funds for their education. Government tax incentives are available that would make offering tuition reimbursement for employees a viable option that may have long-term benefits such as increasing job satisfaction and reducing turnover. Introducing resources such as tuition incentives and career-pathing into an organization can also help to alleviate the effects of stress on emotional exhaustion caused by a lack of, or loss of resources generated by workplace demands. Having a sense of direction and purpose provided by the organization, and working for an employer that values education is of value and relevant to any category of worker.

For the individual, implications are broad and far-reaching as emotional exhaustion has a well-established relationship with psycho-

pathologies. The results of this study have implications for Latino mental health and should be taken into consideration when interpreting results of other research findings related to Latino immigrants. Additionally, experiencing emotional exhaustion and job dissatisfaction and then leaving the organization for work elsewhere is not likely to be effective and may lead to serial job-hopping. Individuals experiencing high stress will need to address the specific stressors and initiate a spiral of resource gain rather than continuing on a spiral of loss. Increasing one's education and learning the English language is a critical step that can help Latinos assimilate more fully into the American culture and lead to higher paying positions. Recent research conducted on Latinos has found that educational attainment led to less vulnerability and greater resilience to the effects of stress (Guinn, Vincent, & Dugas, 2009). In addition, enhanced education and English language acquisition opens the door to a wider range of occupational opportunities. Reducing stress and emotional exhaustion is best achieved by working to enhance one's own resource pool, which will help aid in stress resistance as well as resource acquisition. The field of positive psychology has great implications for stress management. As the present research found, utilizing proactive strategies to cope with challenging events is associated with less stress and emotional exhaustion. I believe that the ability to cope proactively with life events and the capability to set and achieve challenging goals can be learned. For example, individuals might seek out mentoring relationships either at work or home to help with the identification of worthy goals, as well as the support and direction needed for achieving the goals. Although this study found that optimism failed to have the expected effects with respect to buffering the effects of stress, optimism and proactive coping were found to be positively related. These variables can act synergistically in stress management and proactive life fulfillment, leading to a greater expectation that challenges can be met successfully. An optimistic outlook or explanatory style towards life can be learned and has great implications for stress management and the manifestation of psychopathologies (Seligman, Schulman, & Tryon, 2007). Clinicians dealing with Latinos experiencing stress-related psychopathologies may do well to implement cognitive behavioral techniques that help the individual learn positive optimistic and proactive coping strategies, which may help the individual manage stress.

Future studies would benefit from a broader group of participants across multiple occupations. It would be beneficial to see how, and if, acculturative stress influences job outcomes across different occupations that provide higher pay or greater access to resources. In addition, future research could expand on the current study by broadening the conceptualization of acculturative stress to include other areas of

functioning. Replicating this research with a larger sample size may allow for greater statistical power to detect interaction effects between stress, personal resources and outcome variables. Lastly, the findings of this study showing that acculturative stress influences emotional exhaustion and job outcomes can also be expanded to include psychopathologies. Experiencing emotional exhaustion undoubtedly plays a mediating role in other psychological outcomes outside of the work environment.

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