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Adolescents' Obligations toward their Families: Intergenerational Discrepancies and Well-being in Three Ethnic Groups in the Netherlands

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INTRODUCTION

Conflicts between parents and their adolescent children about children's contribution to chores and taking responsibility for family life are quite common. Adolescents generally report that they should have fewer obligations, whereas parents typically want their children to take up more responsibilities (cf. Aycan & Kanungo, 1998; Dekovic, 1999; Fuligni, Tseng, & Lam, 1999; Rispens, Hermanns, & Meeuws, 1996). Henceforth we refer to this situation in terms of intergenerational discrepancies in family obligations. These discrepancies may negatively affect youths' psychological well-being (Rosenthal, Ranieri, & Klimidis, 1996). Steinberg (1990) suggests that disagreements between parents and adolescents may be considered part of normal developmental processes and are therefore not very disruptive in Western societies. However, in particular ethnic groups where norms of respect for parents prevail, differences within the family may be associated with greater problems (Markus & Lin, 1999), especially when families from these ethnic groups are citizens of Western societies (Costigan & Dokis, 2006; Nguyen & Williams, 1989). We investigated this issue in a study on discrepancies between parents and adolescents regarding family obligations among Dutch families and two of the largest immigrant groups in Netherlands: Turkish and Surinamese immigrants. Family obligations are defined in this study as adolescents' and parents' perceived communality of household chores, obedience to parents and a need to support the family and parents (cf. Phinney, Kim-Jo, Osorio, & Vilhjalmsdottir, 2005). We examined discrepancies between adolescents and parents, specifically whether parents want a stronger compliance to family obligations than their children.

The study of intergenerational discrepancies in family obligations is largely inspired by its possible impact on adolescents' well-being (e.g., Harker, 2001). Although we also are interested in this relationship, our primary interest concerns whether it is a common phenomenon or a phenomenon that varies by parents' and adolescents' ethnic background and acculturation.

Family Obligations and Ethnic Differences

Ethnic groups may vary as to values that are seen as important for family life. Parents of north- and west-European origin tend to emphasize the importance of autonomy and

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independence for themselves as well as for their children (Dekovic, 1999; Rispens, Hermanns, & Meeuws, 1996). In less westernized ethnic groups, group members tend to emphasize the importance of family interdependence and conformity (Aycan & Kanungo, 1998; Fuligni, Tseng, & Lam, 1999). For instance, Surinamese and Turkish immigrants in the Netherlands favor mutual connectedness, responsibility for each other's welfare and respect for parents and older persons in general (cf. Crul & Doomernik, 2003; Eldering, 2006). Moreover, an American study by Fuligni et al. (1999) showed that adolescents with a non-Western background (i.e., China, Filipinas, Mexico and Central and South America) perceive more family obligations (running errands, taking care of brothers, sisters, grand parents, and spending time with the family) than adolescents with a European background. Together these studies suggest that non-Western or non-Westernized immigrant youth and their parents endorse obligations that define children's responsibilities for family members' well-being and welfare more than Western or Westernized families.

In this study we compare the family obligations of Dutch families with those of Turkish and Surinamese families. The acculturation context of Surinamese and Turkish families differs in several respects. For instance, the Surinamese that we focus on in this study are descendants of former indentured laborers who arrived in Surinam from British East India around 1900 and migrated to the Netherlands at the time that Surinam became independent in the 1980s. They already had Dutch citizenship. In contrast, the Turks came to the Netherlands in the 1960s to do low paid, unskilled work. They mainly came from rural areas in Turkey. Furthermore, the cultural discrepancy between the Turks and the host nationals (the Dutch) was and is bigger than between the host nationals and the Surinamese. The Turks differ from the Dutch in terms of language, legal and educational system, and main religion (Islam). In contrast, the Surinamese, due to their colonial heritage, already were acquainted with the Dutch language, the legal and educational system and with Dutch religious customs. Finally, the Turks are educationally disadvantaged in comparison with the Surinamese. Their average level of education is generally lower than in the Surinamese group, which coincides with a higher proportion of unemployment (Dagevos, 2006).This is not to say that the educational level of the Surinamese is equivalent with that of the Dutch: The Dagevos (2006) report shows that the Surinamese, when compared to the Dutch, are characterized by lower levels of education and more unemployment.

Intergenerational Discrepancies in Family Obligations and Acculturation

Immigrant children and adolescents have been found to adopt new attitudes and values more rapidly than do their parents (Szapocznik & Kurtines, 1993). Schools seem to play an important role in this divergence. In schools, immigrant children experience a broader exposure to the national group than their parents, and feel a stronger urge to get involved with the national group (Birman, Trickett, & Vinokurov, 2002).

In this study we investigate whether intergenerational discrepancies in family obligations co-vary with aspects of acculturation. In the definition of acculturation we follow Redfield, Linton and Herskovits (1936, p.149) "Acculturation comprehends those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups." Ethnic background is used in this study as an approximation of culture.

On the basis of the research literature we study three aspects of acculturation: parents' education, adolescents' and parents' acculturation preferences (in terms of marriage preferences and general ethnic traditions), and length of residence in the host country.

Parents' education appears to play a role in the magnitude of the discrepancies in family obligations between parents and their children. For instance, Schönpflug (2001a) studied intergenerational value transmission from Turkish fathers to their sons and showed that intergenerational value discrepancies were smallest between well educated fathers and their sons as compared to less well educated fathers. She suggested that better educated parents may be better role models to their children and are more competent in convincing their children through discussions (cf. Grusec, 1997). Turkish immigrants in the Netherlands generally achieve lower educational levels than the Dutch or Surinamese (Gijsberts, 2004). Since Schönpflug's (2001a) study suggests that a lower educational level is related to more intergenerational discrepancies in family obligations, we expect that there are more discrepancies within the immigrant families and explore whether the Turkish families have higher intergenerational discrepancies in family obligations than the Surinamese families.

Regarding acculturation preferences, prior research with immigrant families in Canada (Aycan & Kanungo, 1998) has shown that parents' acculturation attitudes have an impact on socialization in the family. A more recent study by Costigan and Dokis (2006) qualifies this finding. These researchers reported small or no attitude differences between parents and their adolescent children about contacts with the host society regarding more general ethnic aspects of learning and work; whereas, they reported large, and more conflict laden differences in contacts with members of the host society regarding the private domain, e.g., with respect to marriage partners or more generally intimate relationships. Costigan and Dokis refer to these latter domains as private ethnic. In line with this finding, a Dutch study by Crul and Doomernik (2003) has revealed that a high proportion of Turkish men prefer a marriage partner from Turkey. In addition, these authors showed that the social control with respect to maintaining family values is strong for both Turkish and Surinamese groups, especially in lower educated families (see also Eldering, 2006). Linking up to these studies, we expect discrepancies in family obligations to be larger when parents and adolescents differ more as regards to their attitudes towards a marriage partner from the host group, whereas differences regarding more general acculturation preferences (such as general ethnic traditions) are not expected to co-vary with family obligation discrepancies.

Regarding length of residence, it might be argued that if adolescents have a broader and more intensive exposure to the customs and values of the country of settlement, intergenerational discrepancy scores in family obligations might increase. Nguyen and Williams (1989) showed that intergenerational discrepancy scores with respect to family obligations in Vietnamese families increased with years of residence in the United States. Costigan and Dokis (2006) presented comparable results for Chinese families living in Canada. Harker (2001) suggests that immigrant children need time in the society of settlement to experience and adapt to some of the new values characteristic of the new society. Within the family context these steps towards increased acculturation coincide with steps towards increased intergenerational discrepancies: With time second generation children undermining the traditionally strong family ties characteristic of many first generation non-western parents.

Intergenerational Discrepancies in Family Obligations and Psychological Well-being

Intergenerational value discrepancies are important because differences in values between parents and children can cause conflicts that lead to disruption in family cohesion and result in lowered feelings of well-being or even adjustment problems for adolescents (Smetana, 1995; Steinberg, 1990; for an overview see Kwak, 2003). Research with immigrant families has shown that harmonious adolescent-parent relations led to higher levels of children's psychological well-being (Rumbaut, 1997). An Australian study by Rosenthal et al. (1996) showed the complementary relationship: In Vietnamese immigrant families, intergenerational discrepancies in family obligations were related to more parent-adolescent conflicts and lower levels of adolescent well-being. In any case, research results suggest that conflicts with parents adversely affect adolescents' well-being.

A Summary of Hypotheses

On the basis of prior research, we pose the following hypotheses:

1. Extending the findings from the American study by Fuligni et al. (1999), we expect that both immigrant parents and adolescents will report higher family obligation scores than national parents and adolescents, and that intergenerational discrepancies in family obligations will be larger in immigrant families than in national families.

2. Following Schönpflug (2001a) we expect that intergenerational discrepancies in family obligations will be smaller in immigrant families with higher educated parents as compared to families with lower educated parents.

3. Costigan and Dokis (2006) report that intergenerational discrepancies in family obligations are only related to specific acculturation preferences that deal with the ethnic private domain, not to general acculturation preferences. Following these results, we expect that immigrant parents' and adolescents' acculturation preferences with respect to a marriage partner will co-vary with intergenerational discrepancies in family obligations, whereas acculturation preferences with respect to general ethnic traditions will not.

4. Following Nguyen and Williams (1989) and Costigan and Dokis (2006), we expect that in immigrant families intergenerational discrepancies in family obligations will increase with longer residence in the country of settlement.

5. Following Rosenthal et al. (1996), we expect that larger discrepancies regarding family obligations will be associated with poorer well-being (controlling for relevant variables).

We explore whether this latter relationship is stronger among Turkish and Surinamese youth than national youth and whether this relationship is affected by adolescents' sex.

METHOD

Subjects

Seventy-four Surinamese, 115 Turkish, and 92 national adolescent-parent dyads participated in the study. They lived in or near Amsterdam, The Hague, Rotterdam, or Utrecht. All immigrant adolescents were second generation (defined as either born in the country of residence or having arrived before the age of 7). We focused on second generation immigrants since earlier studies have suggested that these immigrants show less adaptive behavior than first generation immigrants (see Sam, Vedder, Ward, & Horenzcyk, 2006 for a more detailed discussion).

Random sampling was not possible due to variations between cities regarding the registration of ethnic background in the population registers. Turkish and national youths were contacted through schools in "concentration areas." The national students attended the same schools as the Turkish immigrant students. Because Surinamese families live in less concentrated areas and thus are harder to target through schools, we decided to find another institution where a high percentage of ethnic group representatives meet, which is the church. As a consequence, we contacted the parents first. This latter strategy means that the Surinamese participants form a particular selection, viz. the parents visit church, which may have a particular relationships with how they think about families and values important for family life, but also with the education and wider adaptation of their children. In short, the sample of Surinamese may not be representative of the whole Suriname group living in the Netherlands.

Of the 128 Turkish parent–child dyads invited to participate, eleven refused (8.6%) and two did not fill out the whole questionnaire, of the 81 Surinamese dyads six refused (7.4%) and one did not complete the whole questionnaire, and of the originally 98 invited Dutch dyads six refused (6%). Overall, the non-response was very low (7.5%).

The sex distribution in the adolescent sample was almost balanced (54% girls). Youths had an average age of 14.86 years (SD = 1.58). The ethnic groups were similar with respect to age

Table 1.

Demographic Information on the Participating Parent–Adolescent Dyads

	Turkish	Surinamese	National
N	117	75	92
Age in Years	14.68 (1.489)	15.15 (1.625)	14.86 (1.635)
% Female	52.1	52	58.7
Length of Residence	14.34 (1.845)	14.31 (2.391)	-
Years of schooling	10.28 (1.317)	11.16 (1.626)	10.75 (1.509)
Parents' level of Education[a]	3.98 (1.264)	4.80 (1.196)	6.26 (.948)
% both parents unemployed	31.6	10	9

Note. Figures refer to means and standard deviations, if not indicated otherwise.

[a] Parents' educational level refers to the highest educational level achieved of either parent (1 = no education; 2 = some comprehensive school; 3 = comprehensive school or equivalent; 4 = some secondary or high school; 5 = secondary or high school; 6 = some college–no degree; 7 = graduate; 8 = post-graduate)

and sex distribution (see Table 1). Surinamese and Turkish adolescents did not differ in regards to length of residence in the Netherlands. On the date of data collection, Surinamese adolescents had completed almost one more year of schooling than the Turkish youth ($F(2,241) = 9.36, p < .001$). Parents' level of education also differed between groups ($F(2,255) = 94.18, p < .001$; Bonferroni: Turks < Surinamese < Dutch) as well as did parents' employment status ($\chi^2(4, N = 235)\square = 7.35, p < .001$; Turks < nationals and Surinamese). The percentage of families in which both parents were unemployed was higher for Dutch (16%) compared to families of Surinamese (9%) and Turks (14%) origin. In more than 56% of the Dutch and Surinamese families both parents were employed, whereas this was the case in 23% of the Turkish families. On average, Turkish and Surinamese mothers were similar with respect to their length of residence in the Netherlands (M = 20.27 years, SD = 5.06). Fathers' length of residence differed between Surinamese (M = 21.07, SD = 4.72) and Turks (M = 22.99, SD = 5.50) ($F(1,156) = 4.90, p < .03$).

Procedure

Turkish and Dutch adolescents were first invited by research assistants to individually complete a questionnaire. Filling in the questionnaire took about an hour. Students were given an envelope with a questionnaire for their parents and instructed to return the completed questionnaire within a week. Surinamese parents were contacted directly at home or in their church. Turkish parents could choose a questionnaire in either Turkish or Dutch. They all used the Dutch version. The research assistants were allowed to give support in the ethnic languages, but none of the adolescents requested interpreter support. Due to possible ethnic group dependent differences in family structure and parental roles, the parents could choose who would fill out the questionnaire. In the Surinamese group, most of the questionnaires were completed by the mother (70%), or the mother and father together (30%). In the Turkish group, the questionnaires were completed by the mother (44%), or the mother together with father (56%). In the Dutch group, 76% was filled out by the mother, 15% by the father, and 9% by the mother and father together. We analyzed whether this difference in persons answering the questions affected the outcomes by using the variable 'which parent(s) completed the questionnaire' as a covariate in the analyses.

Instruments

Most data were collected with a questionnaire compiled by members of the ICSEY team.[1] In this paper, we focused on demographic information, family obligations, acculturation preferences and adolescents' reported well-being.

Adolescents' Demographics

This part of the questionnaire described adolescents' chronological age, age of arrival in the country of residence and sex. By subtracting adolescents' age of arrival from their chronological age we calculated their length of residence.

[1] This study, including the questionnaire used, is part of the International Comparative Study of Ethnocultural Youth (ICSEY; Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder, 2006).

Parents' Demographics

Parents were asked about their chronological age and age of arrival, which were used to calculate parents' length of residence. Moreover, the questionnaire asked to report the highest level of education of both mother and father. This information was used to determine the highest level of education of either parent (ranging from 1 to 8, with 1 indicating 'no education' and 8 indicating '(post)graduate degree').

Family Obligations as Perceived by Adolescents and Parents

This scale consisted of 10 items, indicating adherence to hierarchical family structures based on age and sex, e.g., "Children should obey their parents." "Girls should share in the work at home without payment.," and "It is a child's responsibility to look after the parents when they need help." On a five point scale adolescents and parents could indicate their agreement with the statements (1 = "strongly disagree," 5 = "strongly agree"). This scale was developed by Georgas, Berry, Shaw, Christakopoulou, and Mylonas (1996). Adolescents and parents had identical questionnaire items. The reliabilities (Cronbach's alpha) were satisfactory; for the parents .79, for the youth .77. Parents' and adolescents' scores on this scale were used to compute *intergenerational discrepancies in family obligations*. This score was computed by subtracting the adolescents' reported family obligations scores from the parents' scores (M = .23, SD = .68).

Acculturation Preferences

Both adolescents and parents rated two statements: (a) "I feel that (ethnic group) adolescents should adapt to (national) cultural traditions and also should maintain those of their own, and (b) I would be just as willing to marry a [national] as a [ethnic]." The wording slightly differed in the parent version: "I would equally approve of my child's choice to marry either a [national] or a [ethnic]." Ratings were given on a five-point scale from *strongly disagree (1)* to *strongly agree (5)*.The ratings were used to calculate two measures of intergenerational discrepancies in *acculturation preferences* (cf. Phinney & Vedder, 2006). The first one was about general traditions and the second one referred to marriage preferences. For the general cultural tradition score we subtracted the parents' score for item (a) from the adolescents' score and for the marriage score we did the same with item (b). Mean scores for the resulting discrepancies for general cultural traditions and marriage acculturation preferences were .00 (SD = 1.16) and -0.63 (SD = 1.59) respectively. Using single item "scales" evaded the possibility to know how reliable these measures are.

Adolescents' Reported Well-being

Adolescents' reported well-being was measured with four subscales; self-esteem, life satisfaction, psychological problems, and behavioral problems. Response categories for the first three scales ranged from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The first subscale was Rosenberg's (1965) ten-item self-esteem inventory. Sample items were "I take a positive attitude to myself" and "I feel that I have a number of good qualities." Cronbach's alpha was .82 (M = 3.97, SD = .71). The second subscale measured the overall degree of adolescents' satisfaction with their lives and contained five-items developed by Diener and colleagues (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985). Sample items were: "I am satisfied with my life, and

"The conditions of my life are excellent." Cronbach's alpha was .76 (M = 3.77, SD = .79). The subscale for psychological problems contained 15 items designed to measure depression, anxiety, and psychosomatic symptoms. Items come from a variety of sources (Beiser & Flemming, 1986; Kinzie, Manson, Vinh, Tolam, Anh, & Pho, 1982; Kovacs, 1980/1981; Mollica, Wyshak, deMarneffe, Khuon, & Lavelle, 1987; Reynolds, & Richmond, 1985; Robinson, Shaver, & Wrightsman, 1991). Sample items are: "I feel tired, I feel tense or keyed up," and "My thoughts seem to be mixed up." Cronbach's alpha was .88 (M = 2.12, SD = .59). The fourth subscale, with ten items, was an adaptation of Olweus (1994) and Bendixen and Olweus (1999) anti-social behavior scale. A five-point response category ranged from (1) never to (5) several times in the course of a 12 month period. Sample items were: "Purposely destroyed seats in a bus or a movie theatre, and Bullied another kid." Five of the 10 items dealt with school situations (e.g. "sent out of classroom"). Cronbach's alpha was .81 (M = 1.57, SD = .61).

RESULTS

First, we explored the relationship between adolescents' and parents' family obligation scores, the family obligation discrepancy scores and the earlier mentioned background variables (see Table 2).

Table 2 shows that higher levels of parents' education coincided with lower scores for family obligations and smaller family obligation discrepancies. Also, the analyses revealed a relationship between parental family obligation scores, family obligation discrepancy scores and intergenerational acculturation discrepancy scores with respect to marriage preferences. A comparable relationship was not found with intergenerational acculturation discrepancy scores with respect to general cultural traditions. Independent sample t-tests examined sex differences on all study measures. These tests revealed that boys and girls did not differ on any measure. Also, in all ethnic groups parents had higher family obligation scores than adolescents (Turks, $t(102) = 2.45, p < .05$, Surinamese, $t(61) = 3.78, p < .001$, Nationals, $t(90) = 2.47, p < .05$).

Hypothesis 1. Family obligations are endorsed more strongly both by immigrant parents and adolescents (Turkish more than Surinamese) than by national parents and adolescents and intergenerational discrepancies in family obligations are larger in immigrant families (Turkish more than Surinamese) than in national families.

To investigate hypothesis 1, we conducted a multivariate analysis of co-variance (MANCOVA). Ethnic group was the independent variable, adolescent reported family obligations, parent reported family obligations and the intergenerational discrepancy in family obligations were the dependent variables. Parents' level of education and which parent(s) completed the questionnaire' were entered as covariates. Scores significantly differed as a function of adolescents' ethnic group (Wilks' $F(4,548) = 35.30, p = .000; \eta^2 = .21$). This was the case both for parental scores ($F(2,275) = 40.91, p = .000; \eta^2 = .23$) and adolescents' scores ($F(2,275) = 57.23, p = .000; \eta^2 = .29$), as well as for the intergenerational obligations discrepancy scores ($F(2,275) = 4.98, p = .008; \eta^2 = .04$). Bonferroni post-hoc tests revealed that the Dutch parents (M = 3.00) reported lower family obligation scores than either Surinamese (3.92) or Turkish parents (3.84). There was no statistically significant difference

Table 2.

Correlations Between Family Obligation Scores, Adolescents' Background Characteristics Acculturation Discrepancy Scores, and Well-being (N = 158–283)

	LRA	LRM	LRF	DISCUL	DISMAR	SELFEST	LIFESAT	PSYPROB	BEHPROB	OBLA	OBLP	DISOBL
PE	.19[a]	.13	.00	.05	-.28[c]	.05	.12[a]	.01	.12	-.48[c]	-.57[c]	-.15[a]
LORA		.42[c]	.41[c]	.15[a]	-.03	.12	.02	-.13	-.11	-.02	-.09	-.06
LORM			.51[c]	.00	.08	-.08	-.12	.07	.06	.05	-.06	-.11
LORF				.05	-.08	-.09	-.18[a]	.06	-.02	.08	-.06	-.13
DISCUL					.07	.26[b]	.14[a]	-.12[a]	-.06	-.02	-.04	-.02
DISMAR						.01	-.04	-.10	-.09	.10	.25[c]	.20[b]
SELFEST							.45[c]	-.52[c]	-.07	.12	.12	-.03
LIFESAT								-.35[c]	-.13[a]	.07	.07	-.14[a]
PSYPROB									.21[b]	-.12[a]	-.08	.03
BEHPROB										-.13[a]	-.06	.10

PE = Parents' education, LRA = Length of residence adolescent, LRM = Length of residence mother, LRF = Length of residence father, DISCUL = Intergenerational discrepancy cultural traditions, DISMAR = Intergenerational discrepancy marriage, OBLA = obligations scores adolescents; OBLP = obligation scores parents; DISOBL = Intergenerational discrepancy obligations; SELFEST = self-esteem; LIFESAT = life satisfaction; PSYPROB = psychological problems; BEHPROB = behavioral problems.

[a] $p < .05$; [b] $p < .01$; [c] $p < .001$

between Turkish and Surinamese parents. Regarding the *adolescent* reported family obligation scores, the MANCOVA showed that the scores were lowest in the national group (M = 2.67) and highest in the Turkish group (3.79) and the scores in the Surinamese group were in between (3.54). In the Turkish group the *intergenerational discrepancy* was small (.05), whereas in the Surinamese group it was significantly larger (.37). Although the intergenerational discrepancy in the Dutch group also was rather high (.33) the difference with the other two groups did not reach statistical significance.

To answer hypotheses 2, 3 and 4 we conducted multiple hierarchical regression analyses in which the intergenerational discrepancy scores in family obligations were included as the dependent variable. On the first step we entered parents' highest level of education, the variable 'which parent(s) completed the questionnaire' (dummy coded; 0 = completed by father, 1 = completed by mother) and ethnic group (dummy coded; either or not being Turk) as predictors. On the second step we entered the length of residence of adolescent. Parental reports of the two acculturation preference variables (general cultural traditions and preference for marriage partners) were entered on the third step. One hundred and forty-eight adolescent-parent dyads were included in the analysis; 98 Turks and 50 Surinamese. The reduction of dyads was mainly due to missing information about parents' length of residence. Table 3 presents the results.

Table 3.

Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Intergenerational Family Obligation Discrepancy Scores (N = 148; 98 Turkish and 50 Surinamese adolescent–parent dyads)

	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3		
Variable	*B*	*SE B*	*β*	*B*	*SE B*	*β*	*B*	*SE B*	*β*
Parental education	-.22	.06	-.28[c]	-.22	.07	-.28[c]	-.17	.07	-.23[b]
Filled in by mother or not	-.07	.12	-.05	-.09	.13	-.06	-.12	.13	-.08
Being Turk or not	-.25	.13	-.16	-.21	.14	-.14	-.19	.13	-.12
Length of residence adolescent				.01	.07	.02	.00	.07	-.01
Length of residence mother				.01	.07	.02	.02	.07	.03
Length of residence father				-.10	.07	-.14	-.09	.07	-.12
Acculturation discrepancy ethnic traditions							.01	.05	.01
Acculturation discrepancy marriage							.19	.06	.25[b]
R^2		.08			.09			.16	
F for change in R^2		4.16[b]			0.75			4.96[b]	

Note. Parental education, the length of residence variables and the acculturation discrepancy variables were all centered at their means.
[a]p < .05;. [b]p < .01; [c]p < .001.

Hypothesis 2. Intergenerational discrepancies in family obligations are smaller in immigrant families with higher educated parents as compared to families with lower educated parents.

The regression revealed a significant negative relation between parents' level of education and the intergenerational family obligation discrepancy (β = -.28). Together the variables included in this first block explained 8% of the variance in obligation discrepancy scores. The role of other background variables included in this block was less prominent. SO?

Hypothesis 3. Immigrant parents' and adolescents' acculturation preferences with respect to a marriage partner co-vary with intergenerational discrepancies in family obligations, whereas acculturation preferences with respect to general cultural traditions will not. Adding intergenerational discrepancy scores in acculturation preferences, more particularly those with respect to marriage preferences, added to explaining intergenerational family obligation discrepancies; larger acculturation discrepancies coincided with larger family obligation discrepancies (β = .25). This latter finding confirmed our expectation as did the finding that the acculturation discrepancy as regards more general acculturation traditions would not affect the intergenerational family obligation discrepancy scores. Together these two acculturation variables added 6% to the explanation of variance in obligation discrepancy scores.

Hypothesis 4. In immigrant families there is a positive association between length of residence and intergenerational discrepancies in family obligations.

With all predictors included in the analysis (Table 3, model 3) the length of residence variables for adolescent, mother, and father did not significantly affect the intergenerational discrepancy scores (standardized β's -.01, .03, and -.12 respectively). In short, the analysis did not yield a significant positive relationship between length of residence and intergenerational discrepancies in family obligations.

Hypothesis 5. Larger discrepancies regarding family obligations are associated with poorer well-being (controlling for relevant variables).

We conducted hierarchical regression analyses on the data of all three ethnic groups to assess the relation of discrepancies in family obligations with well-being. This had as a consequence that we could not include predictors that were available for the two immigrant groups only, like length of residence. Neither could we include variables with a different meaning for national and immigrant students, like their acculturation preferences. In the national group the acculturation items actually enquired the nationals' expectations as to the acculturation of immigrants. We conducted four analyses, one for each of the dependent variables: self-esteem, life satisfaction, psychological problems, and behavior problems. On the first step we inserted adolescents' sex (dummy variable) and ethnic group (two dummies: Being Turk or not and being Surinamese or not). We included sex as a possible predictor for well-being based on earlier studies showing that girls generally report lower levels of psychological well-being, whereas boys tend to report more behavior problems (Berry, Phinney, Sam & Vedder, 2006). On the second step we entered parents' level of education. In the third step the intergenerational family obligation discrepancy scores were entered.

The regression analyses revealed (see Table 4) that for self-esteem and psychological problems, family obligation discrepancy scores did not contribute to explaining the scores. Only being a Surinamese contributed significantly to the prediction of self-esteem (β = .26),

Table 4.

Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Adolescents' Well-being (Self-Esteem, Lfe Satisfaction, Psychological Problems, Behavior Problems; N = 278; 112 Turkish 74 Surinamese, and 92 Dutch Adolescents)

		Model 1						Model 2		
Dependent variable	Predictor variable	*B*	*SE B*	*β*	*B*	*SE B*	*β*	*B*	*SE B*	*β*
Self-esteem	Being Turk or not	.07	0.10	.05	.22	.13	.16	.21	.13	.15
	Being Surinamese or not	.40	0.11	.26[c]	.50	.12	.32[c]	.50	.12	.32[c]
	Sex (being a boy or not)	.00	0.08	-.00	-.00	.08	-.00	-.00	.08	-.01
	Parental education				.10	.05	.14	.09	.05	.13
	Intergenerational obligations discrepancy							-.04	.04	-.05
	R^2		.06			.07			.07	
	F for change in R^2		5.31			3.45			.72	
Life satisfaction	Being Turk or not	-.03	0.11	-.02	.20	.14	.13	.18	.14	.11
	Being Surinamese or not	.13	0.12	.08	.28	.13	.17[a]	.30	.13	.17[a]
	Sex (being a boy or not)	.07	0.09	.04	.06	.09	.04	.04	.09	.04
	Parental education				.16	0.06	.20[b]	.13	.06	.18[a]
	Intergenerational obligations discrepancy							-.10	.05	-.13[a]
	R^2		.01			.03			.05	
	F for change in R^2		.92			6.89[b]			4.58[a]	

Table 4.

Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Adolescents' Well-being (Self-Esteem, Lfe Satisfaction, Psychological Problems, Behavior Problems; N = 278; 112 Turkish 74 Surinámese, and 92 Dutch Adolescents) *(contd.)*

		Model 1			Model 2					
Dependent variable	Predictor variable	*B*	*SE B*	*β*	*B*	*SE B*	*β*	*B*	*SE B*	*β*
Psychological problems	Being Turk or not	-.07	.08	-.06	-.14	.10	-.11	-.13	.10	-.11
	Being Surinamese or not	-.38	-.09	-.29	-.42	.10	-.32[c]	-.42	.10	-.32[c]
	Sex (being a boy or not)	-.12	-.07	-.10	-.12	.07	-.10	-.11	.07	-.10
	Parental education				-.04	.05	-.07	-.04	.05	-.06
	Intergenerational obligations discrepancy							.03	.04	.05
	R^2		.08			.09			.09	
	F for change in R^2		8.08[c]			.91			0.72	
Behavior problems	Being Turk or not	-.22	.08	-.18	-.17	.11	-.14	-.15	.11	-.12
	Being Surinamese or not	-.14	.09	-.11	-.11	.10	-.08	-.12	.10	-.09
	Sex (being a boy or not)	.19	.07	.16	.19	.07	.16[b]	.20	.07	.17[b]
	Parental education				.03	.05	.05	.05	.05	.08
	Intergenerational obligations discrepancy							.08	.04	.13a
	R^2		.05			.05			.07	
	F for change in R^2		4.51[b]			.38[a]			4.77	

Note. Parental education and intergenerational obligations discrepancy were centered at their means.
[a]$p < .05$;. [b]$p < .01$; [c]$p < .001$.

whereas all variables included in the first block explained 6% of variance. Being Surinamese was also important for explaining psychological problems ($\beta = -.29$). With this dependent variable the first block explained 8% of the variance in psychological problem scores. Surinamese had a higher self-esteem and less psychological problems than both the national and Turkish adolescents. Family obligation discrepancy scores did contribute significantly to the explanation in differences between adolescents as regards life satisfaction and behavioral problems; larger discrepancies coincided with lower life satisfaction and more behavioral problems.

Being Surinamese and having parents with higher levels of education both contributed to significantly higher life satisfaction scores. Together the variables in the first two blocks explained 3% of variance in adolescents' life satisfaction scores. On the third step, obligation discrepancy scores added 2% to the explanation of variance. With behavior problems the total percentage of explained variance was slightly higher (7%). Almost 5% was explained by the first block and mainly by adolescents' sex. Boys reported to have more behavioral problems than girls. Adding obligation discrepancies as a predictor added 2% of variance to explaining the variance in behavior problems scores of all adolescents; immigrant as well as national.

DISCUSSION

In the introduction we stated that the study of intergenerational discrepancies in family obligations is largely inspired by its possible impact on adolescents' well-being. We clarified that we were also interested in this relationship, but that our primary focus was on the question whether we are dealing here with a common phenomenon independent of ethnic group or with a phenomenon that depends on families' ethnic background and acculturation experiences.

Our findings suggest that, irrespective of ethnic group, parents typically express a stronger wish for their adolescent children's compliance to family obligations than do their adolescent children (Dekovic, 1999). In addition, we found a stronger endorsement of family obligations in both Surinamese and Turkish families than in national families, supporting our hypothesis and earlier studies (e.g., Fuligni et al., 1999, Kagitcibasi, 1996; Nguyen & Williams, 1989). Moreover, this finding suggests that ethnicity affects family members' adherence to particular obligations or family relationship values.

As to the possible role of acculturation experiences we found that a higher level of parent education corresponds to lower intergenerational family obligation discrepancies, confirming our hypothesis. Immigrant status did not affect this relation. We only found a difference in discrepancies in family obligations between the Turkish (the smallest discrepancy) and the Surinamese group (the largest discrepancy). Neither statistically differed from the national group.

Furthermore, we found that parents' and adolescents' acculturation preferences with respect to marriage co-varied with intergenerational discrepancies in family obligations, whereas acculturation preferences with respect to general cultural traditions did not, which concurs with our hypothesis (cf. Costigan & Dorkis, 2006).

Different from what we expected, longer residence of adolescents and parents in the country of settlement was not associated with larger intergenerational discrepancy scores. Earlier we stated that Harker (2001) suggested that immigrant children need time in the society of settlement to experience and adapt to the new value system of the new society. Second generation immigrant children may be more used to the new system than first generation immigrant children and start favoring particularly those values that deal with their independence and autonomy in making choices important for their development toward adulthood. However, this development may increase the risk of undermining the traditionally strong family ties characteristic of many first generation non-western families. Our finding of no association between length of residence and intergenerational discrepancies suggests that the process depicted by Harker has not taken shape. This can mean that neither the children nor their parents have started adapting to and favoring new values, or that children and parents started to change at a similar rate. The fact that length of residence did not affect the relation between acculturation preferences and (discrepancies in) family obligations may be related to the fact that all adolescents were second generation and parents had been in the Netherlands for on average more than 20 years irrespective the ethnic group. Acculturation differences due to length of difference may have washed out or stabilized and no longer or not with the same intensity be affected by the passage of time in the new society of settlement. Earlier we suggested that finding confirmation for this particular hypothesis may be linked to particular conditions, such as being uncertain about ones place in the new society and about links between ones ethnic background and the place of ones ethnic background in the society of settlement (Phinney & Vedder, 2006). Further research will be needed to find out more about such conditions.

Overall the findings regarding the relation between acculturation and (discrepancies in) family obligations suggest that differences in value appreciation between parents and adolescent children may be common to a variety of ethnic groups, but also that acculturation processes may contribute to this phenomenon, albeit in complex ways. Length of residence does not seem to play a role, but parental education and sensitivity to particular domains of acculturation (like choice of the marriage partner) do.

The present study confirms earlier findings that have shown that intergenerational discrepancies in family obligations are linked to more problematic well-being outcomes in immigrant youth (cf. Markus & Lin, 1999; Rosenthal et al., 1996; Szapocznik & Kurtines, 1993). At the same time the findings suggest that the relationships are not strong and that they are not exclusive to immigrant families. National families are equally vulnerable to intergenerational discrepancies in family obligations. In the present study higher intergenerational discrepancies were associated with lower life satisfaction and more behavioral problems. Group specific adaptation outcomes were found for mainly the Surinamese group. Surinamese adolescents reported higher self-esteem, better life satisfaction and less psychological problems than both national and Turkish adolescents. This finding is remarkable. After all, the Surinamese were also characterized by the largest intergenerational obligation discrepancies. These discrepancies co-varied with adolescents' well-being. Together these findings suggest that intergenerational discrepancies in family obligations do not inevitably lead to a lower well-being of adolescents. Ethnic groups may have different strategies to deal with possible aversive effects of intergenerational discrepancies. For instance, it could be that given the parents' ethnic and educational background the

Surinamese families simply worry less about the discrepancy than Dutch or Turkish families, or they have better means to rationalize them and discuss them with their children so that less stress results from them. Our study shows that it is not the length of residence that best predicts the magnitude and adverse effect of intergenerational discrepancies, but that it is how parents and adolescents adapt to the new society.

Limitations and Future Directions

An important shortcoming of the present study is the fact that we did not systematically sample particular adolescent–parent dyads (e.g., daughter-father or daughter-mother dyads), whereas recent studies underscore the importance of a systematic distinction (Boehnke, 2001; Schönpflug, 2001a; Costigan & Dorkis, 2006). A second shortcoming is that all measures used in this study were self-reports, either from adolescents or parents, which results in specific data with a particular and limited validity. Other studies have demonstrated that other methods to assess family obligations, for instance through interviews (Ganong & Coleman, 2005), can yield important insights.

Third, we did not investigate how parents and adolescents deal with intergenerational discrepancies. Goodnow (1994) suggests that the communication skills, educational styles, personal appraisals of the intergenerational discrepancy, and parents' and adolescents' conflict resolution competencies influence the effect of intergenerational discrepancy on family dynamics. Additionally, these educational means and personal modes of communication may be affected by acculturation or may be manifestations of acculturation processes (see Kwak, 2003).

Fourth, the fact that the Surinamese adolescents were sampled through their parents in places of worship and the Turkish and Dutch adolescents directly via schools may have biased our results. All Surinamese participants were active members of a church community, which may have a relationship with parents' and perhaps also the adolescents' value preferences with respect to families and family life. And to the extent that this was the case the findings reported for the Surinamese are valid for this particular selection only and as such they may not be representative of the whole Suriname group living in the Netherlands.

Finally, it is important to note that the acculturation preferences were measured using single items, making it impossible to know how reliable and thus how valid these measures were. This means that the findings referring to this measure remain largely hypothetical awaiting further research. A future replication should consider using reliable scales instead of single items.

A new study could start by exploring whether intergenerational value similarities and discrepancies are actually being discussed in (immigrant) families and whether such discussions can function as a possible mediator between intergenerational discrepancies in family obligations and adolescents' well-being. Our study shows that to do this accurately, attention should also be paid to parents' level of education.

CONCLUSION

In this study the main goal was to investigate the nature of intergenerational discrepancies in family obligations: Is it a common phenomenon or do differences in ethnic background and differences in acculturation influence the intergenerational discrepancies? Like earlier studies we also investigated the relationship between intergenerational discrepancies in family obligations with adolescents' well-being. The findings show that intergenerational discrepancies in family obligations are ethnically mediated, but that higher discrepancies may but need not coincide with more psychological or social problems among adolescents.

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