

Ethnic-Racial Microaggressions and Latine Adolescents' Psychosocial Well-Being: The Protective Role of Family Ethnic Socialization

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Background

The Prevalence of Ethnic-Racial Microaggressions in Adolescence

- Latine adolescents experience cultural stressors and discrimination in their development (due to stereotypes, economic disadvantages, etc.), which are linked to greater internalizing and externalizing symptoms and lower academic engagement (Huynh, 2012; Huynh & Fuligni, 2010; Torres, et al., 2022)
- Ethnic-Racial (ER) Microaggressions** are subtle, indirect messages of inferiority due to one's ethnic and/or racial background
 - Latine adolescents experiencing microaggressions report:
 - Higher depressive symptoms, lower self-esteem, and higher levels of distress (Huynh, 2012)

Family Ethnic Socialization as a Buffer

- Family Ethnic Socialization (FES)** refers to the ways adolescents learn about their cultural background, values, beliefs, and traditions from their family members
 - FES promotes resilience, cultural pride, and a source of support for adolescents (Umaña-Taylor et al, 2016)
 - FES is beneficial for adolescents, and can increase their resilience against discrimination (Martinez-Fuentes, et al., 2021)

We examined whether adolescents' experiences of ER microaggressions were negatively associated with their psychosocial well-being (self-esteem, anxiety symptoms, and depressive symptoms) and whether FES was protective in this association.

Methods

- Data comes from a larger longitudinal study examining the experiences of Latine families during the COVID-19 pandemic between August 2020 and May 2022 (Wilkinson-Lee et al., 2025) -- only second wave data were included in this presentation.
- 219 adolescents (U.S. Southwest) between 12-17 years old ($M = 14.22$, $SD = 1.48$)
 - 50.2% male, 49.8% female; 95% US born, 5% foreign-born
- Surveys were completed online

Results

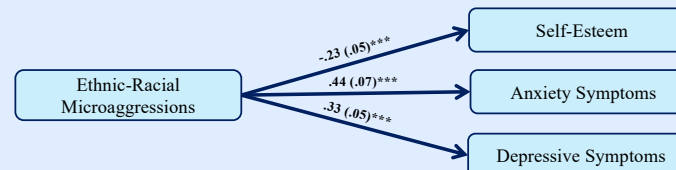


Figure 1. Associations between Ethnic-racial Microaggressions and Psychosocial Well-being (self-esteem, anxiety and depressive symptoms). Unstandardized coefficients are presented. All associations were statistically significant. The model was fully saturated (i.e., perfect model fit). Adolescent age and gender were included as covariates but are not illustrated for ease of presentation. Adolescent gender was coded as 0 = female; 1 = male. Adolescent self-esteem $[B = -.29 (.08), p < .001]$, anxiety symptoms $[B = -.36 (.10), p < .001]$, and depressive symptoms $[B = -.27 (.07), p < .001]$ were regressed on gender. Outcomes were also regressed on adolescent age, but associations were nonsignificant ($p > .05$). *** $p < .001$.

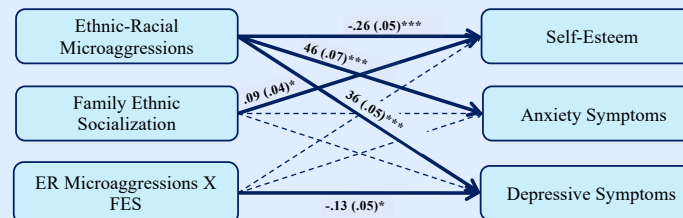


Figure 2. Family Ethnic Socialization as a Moderator Between Latine Adolescents' Ethnic-racial Microaggressions and Psychological Well-Being. Unstandardized coefficients are presented. Bolded lines indicate statistically significant associations. Dashed lines indicate nonsignificant associations. Adolescent age and gender were included as covariates but are not illustrated for ease of presentation. Adolescent gender was coded as 0 = female; 1 = male. Adolescent self-esteem $[B = .30 (.07), p < .001]$, anxiety symptoms $[B = -.36 (.10), p < .001]$, and depressive symptoms $[B = -.28 (.07), p < .001]$ were regressed on gender. Outcomes were also regressed on adolescent age, but associations were nonsignificant ($p > .05$). * $p < .05$. *** $p < .001$.

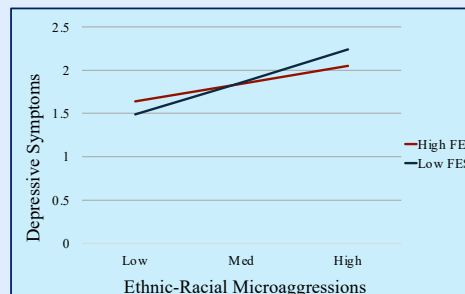


Figure 3. Family Ethnic Socialization Moderates the Association between Latine Adolescents' Ethnic-Racial Microaggressions and Depressive Symptoms. Simple slopes were plotted one standard deviation above and below the mean. Among adolescents who reported low FES, the association between ethnic microaggressions and depressive symptoms was $B = .48, SE = .08, p < .001$. Among adolescents who reported high FES, the association between ethnic microaggressions and depressive symptoms was $B = .26, SE = .05, p < .05$.

Discussion

Hypotheses were **partially supported**: ethnic-racial microaggressions were negatively linked with psychosocial well-being. FES acted as a protective factor for depressive symptoms, but not anxiety symptoms or self-esteem.

- Youth who reported more frequent ER microaggressions also exhibited poorer psychological well-being.
- Specifically, ER microaggressions were associated with lower self-esteem and greater anxiety and depressive symptoms.
- FES **moderated** the association between ER microaggressions and depressive symptoms.
- Youth who reported greater FES exhibited a weaker association between ER microaggressions and depressive symptoms, relative to youth with lower FES. Culturally affirming experiences with family members may provide youth with a sense of cultural pride and a source of familial support that reduces their emotional distress experienced from microaggressions.
- For other psychosocial outcomes, ER microaggressions becoming more repetitive in the daily lives of adolescents could lead to internalized feelings of negativity towards themselves (Torres, et al., 2022), and thus, making it more difficult for these outcomes to be affected by FES. Research on alternate forms of support (e.g., coping strategies) can provide further insight into how to protect Latine youths' psychosocial well-being.

Limitations & Future Studies

- Data were cross-sectional and we were unable to assess the direction of effects.
- Due to sample size limitations, we did not include gender diverse youth in our sample, nor did we examine differences by generational status. Future research examining the different aspects of youth identity and geographical place history are important.
- Future research could examine different sources of ER microaggressions (e.g., peers, adults) and the ways in which additional support networks can mitigate the effects.

Acknowledgements

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