

# Examining the Linkages Between Familial and Cultural Factors and Self-Esteem: The Moderating Roles of Adolescent Parent Stigma and Ethnic-Racial Discrimination

Kealie J. Walker<sup>1</sup>, Norma J. Perez-Brena<sup>1</sup>, Alyssa N. Garcia<sup>1</sup>, Roxana Perez<sup>2</sup>, Renee Perez<sup>3</sup>, & Jenee C. Duncan<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Human Development & Family Science, University of Arizona  
<sup>2</sup>School of Criminal Justice and Criminology, Texas State University  
<sup>3</sup>Family & Consumer Sciences, Texas State University  
<sup>4</sup>Department of Family, Youth & Community Sciences, University of Florida

## BACKGROUND

**Self-esteem** (one's positive perceptions of their qualities and characteristics; APA, 2023), is an important indicator of psychosocial adjustment (Orth & Robins, 2014). Having a positive self-image is important for parents' psychosocial adjustment and their parenting. As such, it is important to identify factors that are promotive to their self-esteem.

Informed by the integrative model of child development (Garcia Coll et al., 1996), we aim to identify socio-culturally relevant factors that are promotive of parents' self-esteem, such as:

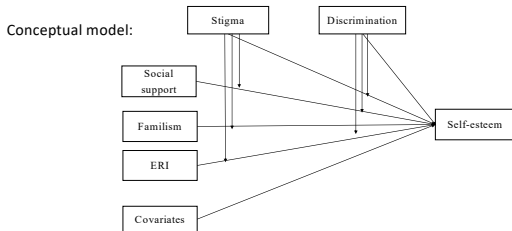
- **Social support** (i.e., emotional and instrumental help),
- **Familism** (i.e., values endorsing family support, unity, and obligation), and
- **Ethnic-racial identity** (ERI; i.e., how one feels about belonging to one's ethnic-racial group).

However, the integrative model also alerts us to the importance of acknowledging the role of promotive or prohibitive contexts that may impact how such socio-culturally relevant factors inform adjustment.

- **Ethnic-racial discrimination** perpetuates negative identity-based stereotypes that threaten self-esteem (Roberson & Pieterse, 2021).
- **Stigma for being a parent** is another salient identity-based factor to consider (SmithBattle, 2020).

## RESEARCH GOALS & HYPOTHESIS

- **Goal 1:** To examine linkages between cultural/familial factors, social support, familism, and ERI, and adolescents' reports of self-esteem.
  - **H1:** There will be a positive effect of ERI, social support, and familism on adolescents' reports of self-esteem.
- **Goal 2:** To examine whether adolescents' reports of stigma specific to pregnancy and parenting, and racial discrimination, moderate these effects.
  - **H2:** The positive effect of support, familism, and ERI will be attenuated by adolescents' reports of stigma and discrimination.

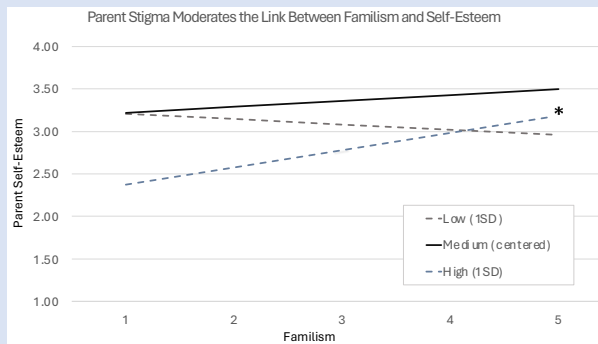
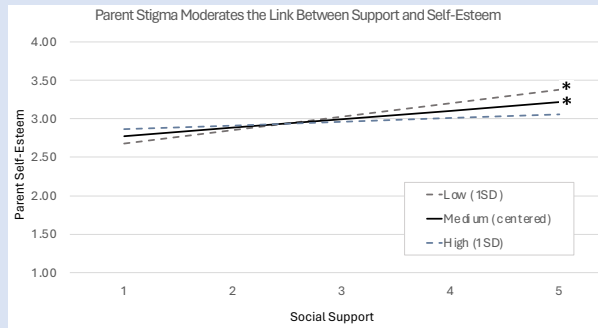


## METHOD

The current study utilizes a sample of Latinx mothers and fathers ( $N = 591$ ,  $M = 16.83$ ,  $SD = 1.29$ , range 14-21 years) who participated in school-based relationship and family program delivered to pregnant and parenting adolescents as well as their co-parents.

Construct	Time	Measure / Source	# Items	Response Scale	Reliability (α)
Self-Esteem	T2	Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1979)	10	1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree	0.83
Social Support	T1	Global Support from Mother Figures During Pregnancy Scale (Umaña-Taylor et al., 2011b; adapted)	7	1 = not at all to 5 = very much	0.89
Familism	T1	Adapted from Knight et al. (2010); Sabogal et al. (1987)	6	1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree	0.81
Ethnic Identity (ERI)	T1	Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (Phinney, 1996)	12	1 = almost never to 4 = very often	0.89
Stigma	T1	Young Parent Stigma Scale (Rice et al., 2019)	10	1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree	0.91
Discrimination	T1	Perceived Discrimination Scale (Whitbeck, 2001)	7	1 = almost never to 4 = very often	0.85
Covariates	T1	Demographics	—	Gender: 0 = boy, 1 = girl; Age in years; Language: 0 = English 1 = Spanish	—

Though social support and familism are promotive, relying solely on individual-level resources is insufficient; institutions must take responsibility for eradicating marginalization.



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## ANALYTIC PLAN & RESULTS

### Analytic Plan:

- All analyses were performed in RStudio (R Core Team, 2022) using the lavaan package (Rossee, 2012).
- We utilized full information maximum likelihood (FIML) to handle missing data and maximum likelihood with robust standard errors (MLR).
- We examined direct effects and then added relevant interactions in two subsequent models.
- Significant interaction terms were probed using Aiken and West's (1991) approach (+/- 1SD above and below the mean).

### Results:

- Correlations are presented in Table 1
- **Main effects:** Social support ( $B = 0.13$ ,  $\beta = 0.19$ ,  $SE = 0.04$ ,  $p = .001$ ) and familism ( $B = 0.12$ ,  $\beta = 0.14$ ,  $SE = 0.05$ ,  $p = .024$ ) were positively linked to self-esteem. However, the ERI  $\rightarrow$  self-esteem link was nonsignificant.
- Adolescent parent stigma was negatively associated with self-esteem ( $B = -0.21$ ,  $\beta = -0.23$ ,  $SE = 0.05$ ,  $p = .001$ ), though discrimination was not directly related to self-esteem.
- **Moderation effects:** adolescent parent stigma moderated the link between social support and self-esteem (Figure 1) and between familism and self-esteem.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics for all study variables

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Age	16.83	1.29											
2. Spanish	0.18	0.38	-.04										
3. Bilingual	0.27	0.44	-.01	-.28**									
4. Nativity	0.87	0.34	.05	-.55**	.05								
5. Parent status	0.49	0.5	.20**	.10*	-.03	-.11**							
6. Gender	0.78	0.41	.02	.09*	-.11**	-.09*	.03						
7. Social support	4.38	0.77	-.02	.03	-.03	.03	-.08*	.08*					
8. Familism	3.57	0.47	-.07	.07	.00	-.14**	.00	-.18**	.36**				
9. ERI	2.77	0.53	.00	.07	-.02	-.09*	.01	-.07	.19**	.15**			
10. Discrimination	1.24	0.42	.03	.00	.03	-.08	.07	-.07	-.19**	-.09*	.12**		
11. Stigma	1.64	0.57	-.05	.01	.02	-.02	.07	.10*	-.29**	-.15**	-.03	.39**	
12. Self-esteem	3.16	0.51	.08	.08	.03	-.06	-.02	-.01	.24**	.08	.09	-.10*	-.27**

Note. Age is measured in years; binary variables are dichotomously coded: language (0 = English, 1 = Spanish), Nativity (0 = foreign-born, 1 = US-born), gender (0 = boys, 1 = girls); continuous variables are composed of mean scores. Bolded values indicate statistical significance. \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$

## DISCUSSION

Our study provided evidence that adolescents' cultural and familial factors are important for their self-esteem during pregnancy and the early years of parenthood. Stigma related to pregnancy and parenting is a salient factor that negatively impacts adolescents' self-esteem during this critical period of development. However, contrary to our hypotheses, ERI was not associated with self-esteem, and discrimination did not moderate the links between familial/cultural factors and self-esteem.

### Strengths and Limitations

- Our study benefited from a large sample of Latinx adolescents residing in the Southwest.
- Our measures have been validated in samples of pregnant/parenting youth and ethnic-racial minority populations.
- Our results align with what the integrative model (Garcia Coll et al., 1996) suggests: prohibitive environments impact the developmental trajectories of adolescent parents.
- Our sample was imbalanced; we have more mothers than fathers, which calls to attention future work to explore fathering in this population more explicitly.

## IMPLICATIONS

- Program facilitators, school administration, and policy makers should seek to reduce the stigma adolescents are exposed to across contexts, including schools, neighborhoods, and healthcare settings.
- Relying solely on individual-level resources is insufficient; institutions must take responsibility for eradicating the stigma, bias, and exclusionary practices that harm pregnant and parenting adolescents, particularly those from marginalized communities.



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