



Ethnic and American Identity Affiliation in US-Born LatinX Adolescents

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Introduction

- Higher minority ethnic identity has been linked to higher self-esteem and lower depressive symptoms in LatinX and ethnic minority youth.^{1,2,3}
- Discrimination may lead individuals from ethnic minority backgrounds to affiliate more with their ethnic minority identity than their mainstream American identity.⁴
- Group identities, such as ethnic and national identities may allow adolescents to feel belonging, which may serve as a contributor to well-being.^{5,6}
- We explore three research questions related to bicultural identity and well-being in LatinX adolescents:
 - (1) What is the association between ethnic minority identification and mainstream American identification in LatinX adolescents?
 - (2) Does perceived discrimination lead adolescents to identify more with their ethnic minority identity and, thus, less with their American identity?
 - (3) How do ethnic minority identification and American identification predict adolescent self-worth?

Methods

- This study used two waves of longitudinal data collected from 184 LatinX adolescents (96.7% US-born; Mean age₁ = 15.0; Mean age₂ = 15.6) in 2011-12 in Southern California.
- Our measures of interest were:
 - American Identification (adapted from Phinney et al., 2007; Cronbach's $\alpha=.88$),
 - Ethnic Identification (Phinney et al., 2007; Cronbach's $\alpha=.91$),
 - Perceived Discrimination (Kulis et al., 2009; Cronbach's $\alpha= .83$) and
 - Self-Worth (Stets and Burke, 2014; Cronbach's $\alpha=.93$).
- We used partial correlation analysis and chi-square independence testing; mediation analysis; and linear regression respectively to answer each of the above research questions. Age, gender and SES (represented by Free and Reduced Lunch status) were included as control variables in all but the X^2 test.
- Little's MCAR test indicated that our data were missing completely at random, so we proceeded with listwise and pairwise deletion for this study.

Overview of Findings

If adolescents scored high on one identity, they tended to score high on the other identity as well (i.e., high American and high LatinX identity co-occurred in our sample).

	Low Mainstream American Identity	High Mainstream American Identity	Total
Low LatinX Identity	15	24	39
High LatinX Identity	15	87	102
Total	30	111	141

Mainstream American identity predicted adolescent self-worth -- however, LatinX identity did not.

Surprisingly, perceived ethnic discrimination did not lead to an increase in LatinX identification or a decrease in mainstream American identification.

Results

- American identification and ethnic identification were positively and significantly correlated at T2 (Pearson's $R=.342, p < .0001$).
- Those reporting high Ethnic identification at T2 were more likely to also report high American identification at T2; $X^2(1, N=141) = 9.51, p < .01; Phi=0.26$.
- There was no direct effect of perceived discrimination at T1 on American or ethnic identification at T2, and ethnic identification at T2 did not act as a mediator between discrimination and American identification.
- American identification at T2 significantly predicted self-worth at T2 ($b=.259, t(171)=3.51, p < .01, partial \eta^2=.07$) and explained a significant proportion of variation in self-worth; $R^2 = .12, F(1, 171) = 2.31, p < .01$. Ethnic identification, age, gender and SES at T2, also included in the regression model, remained non-significant.

Discussion

- It seems that mainstream American and ethnic minority identities may go hand-in-hand for some US-born LatinX adolescents, indicating bicultural integration.
- Additionally, these adolescents' self-worth may be more strongly connected to their identity as Americans rather than as ethnic minorities.
- Future research could examine the role of bicultural identity integration and discrimination experience intensity on the relationship between ethnic identity, American identity and adolescent self-worth with larger and more diverse samples.

References

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