Introduction

PURPOSE

The purpose of the present study is to test a model in which ethnic identity affirmation is a precursor to mental health and academic outcomes whereby mental health mediates the relationship between ethnic identity affirmation and academic related outcomes. The present model could inform prevention and intervention programs aimed at improving the mental and academic well-being of Mexican descent adolescents.

Hypothesized Model

Model Fit

• Path from depressive symptoms to academic motivation removed based on modification indices
• Acceptable Model Fit of model above (Kline, 2005)
  \[\chi^2 (13) = 44.42, p < .001, \chi^2/df = 3.41, CFI = .95, \text{and } RMSEA = .07.\]

Indirect Effects

• Ethnic Identity Affirmation & Academics
  1. EI-A \(\rightarrow\) LS \(\rightarrow\) Motivation
  2. EI-A \(\rightarrow\) Dep Sx \(\rightarrow\) Skepticism
  3. EI-A \(\rightarrow\) Dep Sx \(\rightarrow\) Skepticism \(\rightarrow\) Aspire
  4. EI-A \(\rightarrow\) Dep Sx \(\rightarrow\) Skepticism \(\rightarrow\) Expect
  5. EI-A \(\rightarrow\) Dep Sx \(\rightarrow\) Skepticism \(\rightarrow\) Motivation \(\rightarrow\) Expect

• Life Satisfaction & Academics
  1. LS \(\rightarrow\) Motivation \(\rightarrow\) Aspire
  2. LS \(\rightarrow\) Motivation \(\rightarrow\) Expect

• Depressive Symptoms & Academics
  1. Dep Sx \(\rightarrow\) Skepticism \(\rightarrow\) Aspire
  2. Dep Sx \(\rightarrow\) Skepticism \(\rightarrow\) Expect

METHODS

PARTICIPANTS

• 524 Mexican descent adolescents
  • Ages: 14-20 years (M = 16.23, SD = 1.10)
  • Gender: 46.9% boys, 53.1% girls
  • Generation: Majority 2nd generation (40.7%)

INSTRUMENTS

• Ethnic Identity Affirmation (Ethnic Identity Scale; Umaña-Taylor et al., 2004)
• Depressive Symptoms (Center for Epidemiological Studies Depression Scale-20; Radloff, 1977)
• Life Satisfaction (Brief Multidimensional Students’ Life Satisfaction Scale; Seligson et al., 2003)
• Academic Motivation (Academic Motivation Scale; Plunkett et al., 2003)
• Academic Skepticism (Skepticism About the Relevance Scale for School Success Future Scale; Mcleod et al., 2002)
• Academic Aspirations & Expectations (Single items; Flores et al., 2006)

PROCEDURE

• Incentives given to return consent forms and to participate
• Paper-and-pencil self-report questionnaire
• 30 minutes to complete

RESULTS

ETHNIC IDENTITY AFFIRMATION IMPROVES ACADEMIC OUTCOMES

• A higher level of ethnic identity affirmation is related to more positive mental health outcomes (i.e., higher life satisfaction and lower reporting of depressive symptoms)

CONCLUSIONS

• Life Satisfaction: Having higher levels of life satisfaction is related to better academic related outcomes, namely higher levels of academic motivation and lower levels of academic skepticism. Life satisfaction was also indirectly related to academic aspirations and expectations because of the impact it has on academic motivation.
• Depressive Symptoms: High levels of depressive symptoms is detrimental to academic outcomes. Namely, higher levels are directly related to higher levels of skepticism and indirectly related to lower academic aspirations and expectations. These indirect relationships are explained by increases in academic skepticism as depressive symptoms increase.

MENTAL HEALTH EXPLAINS THE LINKS BETWEEN ETHNIC IDENTITY AFFIRMATION AND ACADEMIC OUTCOMES

• Life Satisfaction: Life satisfaction explained the ethnic identity affirmation-academic motivation and ethnic identity affirmation-academic expectations links. This means that ethnic identity affirmation is related to academic outcomes because it promotes more positive mental health through life satisfaction.
• Depressive Symptoms: Depressive symptoms explained the ethnic identity affirmation-skepticism, 2) ethnic identity affirmation-academic motivations, and 3) ethnic identity affirmation-academic expectations links. This means that ethnic identity affirmation is related to academic outcomes because it promotes more positive mental health decreasing the reporting of depressive symptoms.

REFERENCES