

# Mexican Descent Adolescent & Emerging Adult Alcohol Use Issues and Life Satisfaction: Ethnic Identity Affirmation as a Form of Resilience in the Face of Discrimination



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## INTRODUCTION

### DISCRIMINATION, LIFE SATISFACTION, & ALCOHOL USE

- Discrimination is the unfair treatment of an individual or a group of people, based on certain characteristics, such as race, ethnicity, age, gender, etc.<sup>5</sup>
- Discrimination has been linked to several negative mental health outcomes, such as lower self-esteem, suicidal ideation, state anxiety, trait anxiety, and depression<sup>1, 7, 8</sup>
- Ethnic minorities have been found to be particularly at risk for experiencing discrimination and therefore at higher risk for lower life satisfaction and engaging in excessive alcohol use<sup>1, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 12</sup>

### ETHNIC IDENTITY AFFIRMATION AS A PROTECTIVE FACTOR

- Ethnic identity is a self-concept created by individuals of an ethnic group based on the group's culture, rituals, and social norms. The process of associating negative or positive attitudes with an ethnic identity is known as ethnic affirmation<sup>6, 10</sup>
- Higher levels of ethnic identity affirmation (EI-A), or feeling more positively about your ethnic identity, has been shown to be a potential protective factor for ethnic minorities in the context of culturally based stressors<sup>2</sup>
- Mexican descent adolescents who reported having higher level of EI-A also reported having high levels of self-esteem, whereas adolescents who reported having low levels of EI-A also reported having low levels of self-esteem<sup>11</sup>



## PURPOSE & HYPOTHESES

### PURPOSE

The purpose of the study is to examine the potential moderating, or buffering, role of EI-A in the context of discrimination on alcohol use issues and life satisfaction among Mexican descent adolescents and emerging adults.

### HYPOTHESES

- H<sub>1</sub>:** Higher levels of discrimination will be related to higher levels of alcohol use issues
- H<sub>2</sub>:** Higher levels of discrimination will be related to lower levels of life satisfaction
- H<sub>3</sub>:** EI-A will moderate the relationship between discrimination and alcohol use issues such that those with higher levels of EI-A will be protected against the negative effect of discrimination on alcohol use, and those with lower levels of EI-A will be put at risk for more alcohol use issues in the context of higher levels of discrimination
- H<sub>4</sub>:** EI-A will moderate the relationship between discrimination and life satisfaction such that those with higher levels of EI-A will be protected against the negative effect of discrimination on life satisfaction, and those with lower levels of EI-A will be put at risk for poorer life satisfaction in the context of higher levels of discrimination

## METHODS

### PARTICIPANTS

- Mexican descent adolescents and emerging adults
- Ages:** 14–25 years (M = 17.89; SD = 2.63)
- Gender:** 65.9% women, 33.2% men, and 0.3% transgender

### INSTRUMENTS

- Perceived Racism Scale for Latina/os (RSQ)<sup>14</sup>
- Ethnic Identity Scale (EIS)<sup>16</sup>
- Alcohol Use Disorder Identification Test (AUDIT)<sup>13</sup>
- Satisfaction with Life Scale<sup>15</sup>

### PROCEDURE

- Complete self-report survey on Qualtrics
- Class credit was awarded to college participants and high school participants were entered into a drawing to win one of twenty \$50 cinema gift cards

## RESULTS

### CORRELATIONS:

Table 1. Correlations, Means, Standard Deviations, and Alphas of Latent Variables (n = 722)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Gender	-----						
2. SES	-0.07	-----					
3. Dev Level	0.10**	-0.22***	-----				
4. Discrimination	0.05	-0.13***	0.28***	-----			
5. EI-Affirmation	0.02	-0.04	0.05	-0.28***	-----		
6. Alcohol Use	-0.05	-0.07*	0.25	0.28***	-0.15***	-----	
7. Life Satisfaction	-0.08*	0.22***	0.03	-0.12**	0.14***	-0.13**	-----
	$\alpha$						
	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
	M			1.99	3.71	3.40	24.18
	SD			0.63	0.48	0.52	0.90

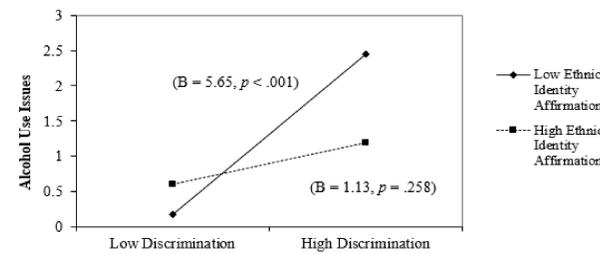
Note: SES= socioeconomic status; Dev = Developmental; EI = Ethnic Identity; \* p < .05, \*\* p < .01, \*\*\* p < .001

**H<sub>1</sub>: Fully supported**

**H<sub>2</sub>: Fully Supported**

### LINEAR REGRESSION ANALYSIS:

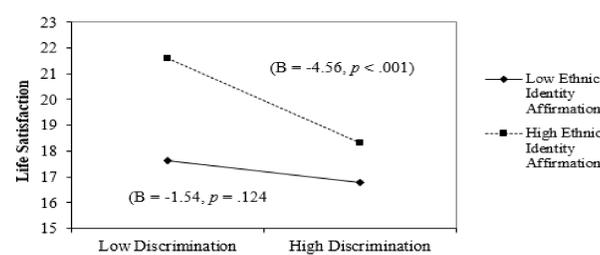
#### ALCOHOL USE ISSUES



**H<sub>3</sub>: Fully supported**

- Higher EI-A: protective in relationship between discrimination and alcohol use issues given there is a non-significant relationship for this group
- Low EI-A: risk factor in the relationship between discrimination and alcohol use given the significant positive relationship for this group

#### LIFE SATISFACTION



**H<sub>4</sub>: Fully Supported**

- Higher EI-A: protective in relationship between discrimination and life satisfaction issues given there is a non-significant relationship for this group
- Low EI-A: risk factor in the relationship between discrimination and life satisfaction use given the significant positive relationship for this group.

## CONCLUSIONS

### IMPLICATIONS

- Increasing ethnic identity for adolescent and college-aged Latinx individuals can lead to higher psychological well-being and lower alcohol use in the context of higher discrimination
- Prevention programs aimed at strengthening ethnic identity affirmation is needed

### LIMITATIONS & FUTURE RESEARCH

- Data was collected cross-sectionally which limits the ability to make causal inferences
- Participants were recruited from schools located in the U.S. Texas-Mexico Rio Grande Valley, therefore our findings are not generalizable across the U.S.
- Future longitudinal research could shed light onto the long-term impact of discrimination on alcohol use and mental health while also considering that the ethnic identity development process and affirmation about one's ethnic group can shift over time and over development

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