

Ethnic-Racial Discrimination Experiences and Ethnic-Racial Identity Predict Adolescents'
Psychosocial Adjustment: Evidence for a Compensatory Risk-Resilience Model

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Abstract

Theory and empirical evidence indicate that ethnic-racial discrimination serves as a risk factor for adolescents' psychosocial adjustment, whereas ethnic-racial identity (ERI) development promotes positive youth adjustment and can mitigate the negative outcomes of discrimination-related risk. In Colombia, the legacies of an ethnic-racial hierarchy, *mestizaje* ideology (i.e., the assumption that everyone is racially mixed), and contemporary multiculturalism education reforms create a unique context for understanding adolescents' experiences of ethnic-racial discrimination, ERI development, and their implications for psychosocial adjustment. In this study of Colombian adolescents ($N = 462$; $M_{\text{age}} = 15.90$ years; 47.3% female), almost 40% of participants reported experiencing ethnic-racial-based discrimination. Experiencing more frequent ethnic-racial discrimination was associated with lower self-esteem and higher depressive symptoms, whereas higher ERI resolution (i.e., gaining sense of clarity about ethnic-racial group membership) and affirmation (i.e., feeling positively about ethnic-racial group membership) were associated with higher self-esteem and lower depressive symptoms. ERI exploration (i.e., learning history and gaining knowledge about ethnic-racial group membership) was also associated with higher self-esteem and moderated the association between discrimination and depressive symptoms, such that this association was stronger at higher compared to lower levels of ERI exploration. Findings provide novel evidence for ethnic-racial-related risk and resilience processes among Colombian youth.

Keywords: discrimination, ethnic-racial identity, Colombia, adolescents, ethnicity, race

Associations Among Adolescents' Ethnic-Racial Discrimination Experiences, Ethnic-Racial Identity, and Psychosocial Adjustment: Evidence for a Compensatory Risk-Resilience Model

Experiencing unfair treatment based on one's ethnic-racial background (i.e., ethnic-racial discrimination) poses a developmental risk to youth adjustment (Benner et al., 2018; Marks, Ejesi, McCullough, & García Coll, 2015). Ethnic-racial identity (ERI) is a multidimensional psychological construct that reflects the developmental *process* through which youth develop beliefs and attitudes about their ethnic and/or racial group and the *content* or feelings attached to this aspect of their identity (Umaña-Taylor et al., 2014). An integrated conceptualization of ERI has brought together previously distinct literatures focused on “ethnic” or “racial” identity in an effort to better align theory and research with adolescents' lived experiences, which include identifying with shared values, practices, and traditions of one's ethnic heritage *and* identifying with a group that is racialized in a given sociohistorical context as a function of contemporary social constructions of race (Umaña-Taylor et al., 2014). Adolescents' ERI process and content have been linked with positive adjustment (Rivas-Drake et al., 2014), and ERI has been identified as a key developmental competency in culturally informed models of resilience (Neblett, Rivas-Drake, & Umaña-Taylor, 2012).

Both ethnic-racial discrimination and ERI become particularly salient during adolescence as youth mature in cognitive awareness of ethnicity-race and navigate more social situations outside the home (Verkuyten, 2016). The concepts of ethnicity, race, and ERI are best understood with attention to the sociohistorical context and ethnic-racial hierarchy of a particular country or region (Umaña-Taylor et al., 2014), introducing the question of whether ethnic-racial-based discrimination and identity formation processes serve as universal developmental risks and competencies, respectively, across cultural contexts. The present study drew upon a culturally

informed risk and resilience framework (e.g., Neblett et al., 2012) and cultural-ecological theories of development (e.g., García Coll et al., 1996) to assess associations among ethnic-racial discrimination, ERI, and psychosocial adjustment (i.e., self-esteem and depressive symptoms) among Colombian adolescents.

Ethnicity-Race, Discrimination, and Identity in Colombia

According to ethnic labels recognized by the Colombian national census, Colombians identify as *negro*, *mulato*, *afrodescendiente*, or *afrocolombiano* (i.e., black, African-descendant, or African-Colombian; 6.7%), *indígena* (i.e., indigenous; 4.3%), *raizal* (i.e., African-Caribbean in the archipelago of San Andrés, Providencia, and Santa Catalina; 0.06%), *palenquero* (i.e., African-descendant in San Basilio de Palenque; 0.02%), *gitano* (i.e., gypsy or Roma; 0.01%) or *sin pertenencia étnica* (i.e., without belonging to an ethnicity; 87.6%); the latter being a designation that refers to all other populations found in the country, mostly designated as *mestizo* (i.e., mixed indigenous and European ancestry) and *blanco* (i.e., white), but also including *judio* (i.e., Jewish), *árabe* (i.e., Arab), and other ethnic groups not formally recognized by the census (DANE, 2019). Similar to other Latin American countries that faced the Spanish conquest, Colombia has historically distributed power and resources according to an ethnic-racial hierarchy favoring those who are racially White and of European descent (Chavez-Dueñas, Adames, & Organista, 2014).

More recently, Colombian policies have emphasized *mestizaje* ideology, or the assumption that everyone is racially mixed (Chavez & Zambrano, 2006; Telles & Bailey, 2013). Sociologists have argued that *mestizaje* ideology effectively operates to mask the existing ethnic-racial hierarchy and advances institutional denial of racism in Colombia (Telles & Bailey, 2013), despite documented ethnic-racial disparities in economic, health, and education outcomes

(Perreira & Telles, 2014). Reforms in the 1991 Colombian Constitution have increased the salience of collective ethnic-racial group identities specifically by establishing rights for traditionally marginalized groups (e.g., official status for minority languages, guaranteed bilingual education; Hooker, 2005). Although Colombian law was passed in 2011 to protect vulnerable ethnic-racial minority (e.g., Afro-Colombian, indigenous) groups from discriminatory acts (*Ley 1481*), racism continues to operate in Colombia at structural and individual levels (Telles & Bailey, 2013). For example, darker (compared to lighter) skin color has been related to more ethnic-racial-based discrimination and poorer self-reported health among adults in Colombia and other Latin American countries (e.g., Perreira & Telles, 2014).

Identity development research based on samples from Colombia and other Latin American countries is substantially underrepresented in the literature. Most identity research has been conducted in North America and Europe (Schwartz, Zamboanga, Meca, & Ritchie, 2012), a pattern that applies to ERI studies as well. For example, in a recent meta-analysis of 51 studies focused on ethnic-racial discrimination and ERI, only five studies were conducted outside the United States (U.S.), all of which were studies of adults conducted in Canada and Europe (Yip, Wang, Mootoo, & Mirpuri, 2019).

Regarding developmental considerations, the prevalence and sequelae of ethnic-racial discrimination experiences are particularly important during adolescence given growing cognitive maturity during this developmental period that heightens awareness of prejudice, coupled with increasing social group pressures in peer and school settings (Benner et al., 2018; Yip et al., 2019). In ethno-racially diverse societies, being treated unfairly based on one's ethnic-racial background can occur in various contexts of adolescents' daily lives, including those with peers, adults in school, and other adults in society (Fisher, Wallace, & Fenton, 2000; Marks et

al., 2015), all of which have implications for youth health and adjustment outcomes (Benner et al., 2018). In part due to the growing cognitive maturity with which adolescents navigate their social worlds, personal and social identity formation becomes especially salient during this developmental period (Schwartz et al., 2012), including ERI and the ability to make sense of one's position in social groups (Umaña-Taylor et al., 2014; Verkuyten, 2016). Of available research focused on ethnicity-race, discrimination, and ERI in Colombia (or Latin America), few studies have focused on adolescence (exceptions below).

Extending the Risk and Resilience Framework

According to a risk and resilience framework (Masten, Cutuli, Herbers, & Reed, 2009), the presence of a *risk factor* (e.g., ethnic-racial discrimination) increases the likelihood of poor outcomes, whereas a *promotive factor* (e.g., ERI) is associated with positive outcomes across all levels of risk. In a *compensatory* model, promotive factors counteract exposure to risk through an opposite, direct, and independent association with outcomes, whereas in a *protective factor* model, promotive factors increase the likelihood of positive outcomes specifically in the context of risk (i.e., reduces the negative effects of risk on adjustment, tested with statistical interactions; Zimmerman et al., 2013). Extensions of this risk and resilience framework include accounting for societal stratification mechanisms that constrain youth development (e.g., racism, ethnic-racial discrimination) and highlighting culturally adaptive mechanisms that promote developmental competencies (e.g., learning about and appreciating one's ethnic heritage) within the intersecting ecologies of youth's daily lives (García Coll et al., 1996; Neblett et al., 2012).

The negative developmental implications of ethnic-racial-based discrimination have been well-documented in studies of adolescents in the U.S. (Benner et al., 2018; Yip et al., 2019). Research has also identified ethnic-racial discrimination as a risk factor related to poorer

psychosocial adjustment and health among adolescents in other countries (e.g., Alderete et al., 2016; Schachner, van de Vijver, & Noack, 2018; also see Marks et al., 2015, for review). For example, experiencing racial insults was associated with increased risk for binge drinking in a multi-ethnic-racial sample of adolescents in Argentina (Alderete et al., 2016). To our knowledge, studies have yet to examine the salience of ethnic-racial discrimination for Colombian youth or test ethnic-racial discrimination as a developmental risk factor in Colombia. This may be because of a general view that issues of ethnicity-race are not relevant in a country that espouses a *mestizaje* ideology (Chavez & Zambrano, 2006; Hooker, 2005). As evidenced by the 1991 constitutional reforms, Colombia's government seeks to move past its history of marginalizing ethnic-racial minority groups through multiculturalism reforms (Hooker, 2005).

Conversely, ERI is a developmental competency that may serve to compensate for exposure to the risk of discrimination (Umaña-Taylor et al., 2014). The current study focused on three components of ERI based on prior evidence for their positive relations with psychosocial adjustment in studies of U.S. adolescents (e.g., Rivas-Drake et al., 2014), including the processes of *exploration* (i.e., learning and seeking information) and *resolution* (i.e., developing a clearer understanding), as well as *affirmation* (i.e., positive feelings about one's ethnic-racial group). Research has found support for the promotive role of ERI in other countries, including Italy (Ferrari, Ranieri, Barni, & Rosnati, 2015), Germany (Spiegler, Sonnenberg, Fassbender, Kohl, & Leyendecker, 2018), and México (Guitart, Rivas Damián, & Pérez Daniel, 2011). For example, ERI commitment (i.e., exploration and sense of ethnic-racial group identification) was positively associated with self-esteem among indigenous university students in México (Guitart et al., 2011). To our knowledge, studies of adolescent ERI development have not yet been extended to Colombia.

ERI may also serve as a protective factor in the context of risk, specifically by bolstering adolescents' sense of self and abilities to cope with ethnic-racial stereotypes and discrimination (Neblett et al., 2012). However, findings are mixed and vary across ERI measures used, ethnic-racial groups, and study outcomes (Yip et al., 2019). For example, ERI affirmation has emerged as a protective factor attenuating the negative association between discrimination and self-esteem in a study of Black, Latino, and Asian American adolescents (Greene, Way, & Pahl, 2006), but ERI affirmation was not a protective factor for the same association in a study of Latino and Asian American adolescents (Huynh & Fuligni, 2010). The process of ERI exploration may also represent a risk-enhancing developmental vulnerability under certain circumstances (Yip, 2018). For example, youth who are actively exploring what their ethnicity-race means to them without fully understanding this aspect of their identity may be especially sensitive to the harmful effects of discrimination (Torres & Ong, 2010).

The Current Study

Following a risk and resilience framework (Masten et al., 2009; Neblett et al., 2012), the current study hypothesized that (a) Colombian adolescents who have experienced more frequent ethnic-racial discrimination (i.e., risk factor) would report poorer psychosocial adjustment (i.e., lower self-esteem, higher depressive symptoms) and (b) Colombian adolescents who had explored, had a clearer understanding of, and felt more positively about their ERI (i.e., promotive factors) would report better psychosocial adjustment (i.e., higher self-esteem, lower depressive symptoms; compensatory model). Further, ERI exploration, resolution, and affirmation were tested as moderators of the associations between ethnic-racial discrimination and adjustment. Guided by cultural-ecological theories (e.g., García Coll et al., 1996), and findings from studies in other sociocultural contexts (e.g., Benner et al., 2018; Marks et al., 2015; Rivas-Drake et al.,

2014; Yip et al., 2019), there was no reason to expect that the developmental risk of experiencing ethnic-racial discrimination or the promotive role of ERI would function differently for Colombian adolescents.

Method

Participants

In 2017-2018, participants were recruited from six schools in Medellín, Colombia, a major metropolitan area with a population of over 3.9 million people (DANE, 2019). School sites were selected to reflect socioeconomic diversity. In total, there were 462 participants ($M_{\text{age}} = 15.90$, $SD = 1.15$ years; 47.3% female) in Grades 9 (36.4%), 10 (31.8%), and 11 (31.4%), the last three years of secondary schooling in Colombia. Participants self-identified their ethnic-racial background as *mestizo* (i.e., mixed indigenous and European ancestry; 39.2%), *Latino* (i.e., transnational label used by individuals of Latin American descent; 32.3%), *blanco* (i.e., white; 16.5%), *mezcla de blanco y negro* (i.e., mix of white and black; 4.1%), *mezcla de blanco e indígena* (i.e., mix of white and indigenous; 1.5%), *afrodescendiente* (i.e., African-descent; 1.3%), *negro* (i.e., black; 1.1%), or another designation (4.0%; e.g., *indígena*; *mestizo y Latino*; *blanco y Latino*, etc.). Most participants were born in Colombia (94.8%), and those born in other countries (e.g., Venezuela, United States, México, Chile, Spain) had lived in Colombia an average of 7.50 years. Based on parent/guardian-reported socioeconomic stratum (SES), 6.9% of participants were considered low-low, 26.8% were low, 28.8% upper-low, 13.0% medium, 13.6% medium-high, 7.4% high, and 3.5% did not report SES.¹

Procedures

¹ Socioeconomic stratum (SES) is assigned by the Colombian government based on housing characteristics and living conditions (e.g., type of housing structure, housing materials, degree of overcrowding per unit). SES labels used by the Colombian government are (1) *bajo-bajo*, (2) *bajo*, (3) *medio-bajo*, (4) *medio*, (5) *medio-alto*, (6) *alto* (DANE, 2013).

Participants who obtained parental consent and provided youth assent completed paper-and-pencil surveys during school time on one occasion, which took approximately 45 minutes. Surveys were administered by the research team, which included a Colombian-American faculty member who is a native Spanish speaker and was leading this project in Colombia during a research sabbatical, two Colombian faculty collaborators, and student research assistants who were psychologists or psychologists-in-training at the host university in Colombia. Approximately 2-4 research team members were present in each classroom to provide instructions and answer participants' questions. All surveys were completed in Spanish, and all measures were previously validated Spanish-language versions. Nevertheless, Colombian members of the research team reviewed all items to ensure clarity and cultural relevance.

Measures

Self-esteem. Participants completed the 10-item (e.g., "On the whole I am satisfied with myself") Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1979) in reference to their self-esteem in the last year, reflecting standard practice. Responses ranged from *Strongly disagree* (1) to *Strongly agree* (4). After reverse scoring appropriate items, higher average scores reflected higher self-esteem ($\alpha = .87$).

Depressive symptoms. Participants completed the 20-item Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale (CES-D; Radloff, 1977), which assessed symptoms associated with depression regarding the last week, reflecting standard practice (e.g., "I felt depressed"). Responses ranged from *Rarely or none of the time* (0) to *Most of the time* (3). After reverse scoring appropriate items, higher sum scores reflected a greater number of depressive symptoms ($\alpha = .89$).

Ethnic-racial discrimination. An 11-item version of the Adolescent Discrimination Distress Index (ADDI; Fisher et al., 2000) was used. Participants reported how often instances of discrimination had occurred to them in the last year, from *never* (1) to *a whole lot* (5). Items assessed discrimination from adults in school, adults outside of school, and from peers (e.g., “Were you called insulting names by other kids because of your race/ethnicity?”). Higher scores reflected more frequent experiences ($\alpha = .91$).

Ethnic-racial identity. Consistent with the integrated conceptualization of ERI to consider ethnic and racial group membership (Umaña-Taylor et al., 2014), instructions to participants included: “The next statements refer to ‘ethnic identity,’ or how much one feels they identify with the characteristics of an ethnic or racial group.” The Ethnic Identity Scale – Brief (EIS-B; Douglass & Umaña-Taylor, 2015) includes three subscales assessing *exploration* (3 items; e.g., “I have attended events that have helped me learn more about my ethnicity;” $\alpha = .71$), *resolution* (3 items; e.g., “I know what my ethnicity means to me;” $\alpha = .83$), and *affirmation* (3 items; e.g., “I feel negatively about my ethnicity” reverse coded; $\alpha = .57$). Responses ranged from *Does not describe me at all* (1) to *describes me very well* (4).

Covariates. Control variables included participants’ age and gender (1 = female, 0 = male). Age was calculated using parent-reported birthdate and survey completion date.

Results

On average, 39.5% of participants reported they had experienced at least one instance of ethnic-racial discrimination in the last year (Table 1). The most frequently endorsed experiences included, “Were you called insulting names by other kids because of your race/ethnicity? (30.4% of participants); “Did other kids assume the way you speak was poor because of your

race/ethnicity? (11.7% of participants); and “Did people act like they were suspicious of you because of your race/ethnicity? (11.5% of participants).

Based on examination of skewness and kurtosis values, both outcomes were normally distributed. Ethnic-racial discrimination was significantly negatively correlated with self-esteem and positively correlated with depressive symptoms (Table 2). In contrast, ERI resolution and ERI affirmation were significantly positively correlated with self-esteem and negatively correlated with depressive symptoms. ERI exploration was significantly positively correlated with self-esteem but not significantly correlated with depressive symptoms.

Multivariate Path Analysis

Missing data (< 4.0% for all variables) were handled using maximum likelihood estimation in *Mplus* version 8 (Muthén & Muthén, 2017). A multivariate path analysis model was fit to the data with self-esteem and depressive symptoms as correlated outcomes (Figure 1). Participants’ age and gender were covariates. Nested data were not accounted for in analyses because intraclass correlations (ICCs) indicated < 4.0% of the variance in each of the focal measures was attributable to school-level clustering (i.e., below the recommended threshold to consider school-level effects in nested data; Peugh, 2010).

The model fit the data well: $\chi^2(1) = 0.12, p > .05$. RMSEA = .000, 90% CI [.000 – .087]. CFI = 1.000. SRMR = .002 (Figure 1). Based on R^2 estimates, the predictors collectively accounted for 14.4% of the variance in self-esteem and 14.5% of the variance in depressive symptoms, $ps < .001$. Consistent with hypotheses, ethnic-racial discrimination was negatively associated with self-esteem and positively associated with depressive symptoms. Also consistent with hypotheses, and while controlling for ethnic-racial discrimination, ERI resolution and ERI affirmation were both independently positively associated with self-esteem and negatively

associated with depressive symptoms. ERI exploration was also positively associated with self-esteem, but not significantly associated with depressive symptoms.

ERI exploration significantly moderated the association of ethnic-racial discrimination with depressive symptoms (Figure 1). Probing the simple slopes indicated that ethnic-racial discrimination was more strongly associated with depressive symptoms at high levels of ERI exploration (+1 *SD*; 16.1% of sample), $\beta = .40, p < .001$, 95% CI [.24, .56] compared to low ERI exploration (-1 *SD*; 23.7% of sample), $\beta = .17, p = .03$, 95% CI [.01, .33] (Figure 2). Mean levels of depressive symptoms did not significantly differ by ERI exploration at low levels of discrimination, $\beta = -0.05, p = .39$, 95% CI [-.16, .06], or high discrimination, $\beta = 0.14, p = .09$, 95% CI [-.02, .30]. No other interactions were statistically significant, $ps > .13$.

Sensitivity Analysis

All findings were consistent when also including SES as a covariate, which was not significantly associated with the study outcomes. A multi-group path analysis model was fit using ethnic-racial self-identification as the grouping variable, including participants from groups with sufficient representation for this sub-group analysis (i.e., *mestizo*, $n = 181$; *Latino*, $n = 149$; *blanco*, $n = 76$). Constraining all regression paths in Figure 1 to be equal across these three groups did not result in significantly worse model fit, $\chi^2(36) = 50.58, p > .05$, indicating no significant moderation of any of the hypothesized paths by ethnic-racial self-identification.

Discussion

Almost 40% of Colombian adolescents in the current study experienced ethnic-racial-based discrimination at least once in the last year. This prevalence estimate is similar to another study in Latin America that surveyed adolescents about ethnic-racial discrimination (e.g., Argentina; Alderete et al., 2016). Further, consistent with our hypothesis and studies of youth in

other countries (Marks et al., 2015), the frequency with which youth experienced ethnic-racial discrimination corresponded with concurrently lower self-esteem and elevated depressive symptoms. In contrast, also consistent with our hypotheses and prior research in North America (e.g., Guitart et al., 2011; Rivas-Drake et al., 2014) and Europe (e.g., Spiegler et al., 2018), Colombian adolescents with a greater sense of clarity and who felt more positively about their ethnic-racial background reported concurrently higher self-esteem and lower levels of depressive symptoms, even when adjusting (i.e., controlling) for ethnic-racial discrimination. To our knowledge, this is the first study of Colombian adolescents providing quantitative evidence for (a) ethnic-racial discrimination as a developmental risk factor associated with increased likelihood for poor adjustment, and (b) ERI exploration, resolution, and affirmation as independent promotive factors that may compensate for this developmental risk to adjustment.

These findings help to contextualize the work of sociologists documenting racism and ethnic-racial prejudice operating at institutional levels in Latin America (e.g., Telles & Bailey, 2013) by linking Colombian adolescents' reports of ethnic-racial discrimination with adjustment problems. This preliminary evidence reveals the need to understand ethnicity and race and how the legacies of these social constructions operate to influence youth development (i.e., awareness of stereotypes, attitudes toward and social interactions with other groups) and adjustment. The ways in which youth identified their own ethnic-racial group(s) in this study contributes to a more nuanced understanding of how ethnicity-race operates in Colombia, particularly given that self-identification labels did not overlap perfectly with labels formally recognized by the Colombian national census (DANE, 2019). For example, almost 1 out of 3 adolescents in this sample identified their ethnic-racial group as *Latino*, a transnational term that may be due to

rapidly advancing globalization (De Fina & Perrino, 2013). Given the limited prior work, more research is needed to examine how youth make sense of ethnic-racial labels in Colombia.

Findings support a compensatory model of resilience (Zimmerman et al., 2013), in which exploring, understanding, and feeling positively about one's ERI was directly related to more positive adjustment over and above the variance accounted for by discrimination experiences. This study offers novel preliminary evidence for the salience of ERI development within the sociohistorical context of Colombia, despite the well-documented barriers to open discussions of race and racism stemming from the pervasive belief that everyone in Colombia is racially mixed (i.e., *mestizaje* ideology; Telles & Bailey, 2013). Having a greater sense of clarity and feeling more positively about one's ethnic-racial group both emerged as promotive of self-esteem and mental health. Engaging in more exploration about one's ethnicity-race was also associated with higher self-esteem. Consistent with the theoretical conceptualization of ERI development (Umaña-Taylor et al., 2014), these results in a Colombian sample suggest that ERI exploration, resolution, and affirmation potentially serve as universal features of adolescent development that warrant further consideration to build better understanding of a more global developmental science. These novel findings are intriguing given consistency with extant ERI research, which to date has focused almost exclusively on youth in North America and Europe (Schwartz et al., 2012; Yip et al., 2019). As other studies have done (e.g., Knowles & Tropp, 2018), future research should consider the ways in which government policies and other features of the sociopolitical context may shape ERI processes, such as the influence of Colombian education reforms supporting minority languages and indigenous heritage (Hooker, 2005).

Associations between ethnic-racial discrimination and adolescents' adjustment did not vary by adolescents' sense of clarity about or by their degree of positive feelings toward their

ethnic-racial group. On the other hand, ethnic-racial discrimination was more strongly positively associated with levels of depressive symptoms for adolescents who engaged in more ERI exploration. This is consistent with a study of U.S. Latino adults (Torres & Ong, 2010), in which daily experiences of ethnic-racial discrimination were more strongly associated with depressive symptoms for those with higher (compared to lower) levels of ERI exploration. There may be increased vulnerability for youth's mental health under conditions characterized by both the presence of discrimination *and* the initial stages of exploring what ethnic-racial group membership means, without other contextual supports (e.g., family, school) or developmental assets (e.g., resolution, pride) to cope with ethnic-racial-based stress. The ERI exploration process may serve to compound the negative psychological consequences resulting from more frequent discrimination, though future work should consider multiple ERI dimensions in combination (e.g., person-centered approach) and developmental and contextual variability (e.g., age, degree of ethnic-racial diversity in school; Yip, 2018).

This study was not without limitations. Findings are based on cross-sectional data and should not be interpreted with causal inference. Longitudinal studies are needed to better understand how Colombian youth's experiences of ethnic-racial discrimination and ERI change and contribute to adjustment and health over time. The sample was diverse in ethnicity-race and SES, but represents one urban area in Colombia and generalizability is unknown. Adolescents' appraisal of how positively their ethnic-racial group is viewed in society (i.e., public regard) was not assessed, which has demonstrated important promotive and protective functions in other (mostly U.S.-based) studies (Yip et al., 2019). Therefore, future research with Colombian youth should explore potential resilience patterns related to ERI public regard.

In conclusion, ethnicity and race are salient social constructs in Colombia with implications for youth adjustment, furthering global research into the damaging effects of structural racism on child development. Experiencing discrimination based on ethnic-racial background is a reality for many Colombian adolescents, and these experiences were associated with lower self-esteem and higher depressive symptoms. Adolescents' ERI emerged as a promotive factor that may compensate for this risk, thereby representing important developmental mechanisms to be considered in interventions in Colombia.

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Table 1

Frequency of Colombian Adolescents' Ethnic-Racial Discrimination Experiences

Item	% who have experienced at least once or twice in last year				
	Full Sample (<i>N</i> = 462)	<i>mestizo</i> (<i>n</i> = 181)	<i>Latino</i> (<i>n</i> = 149)	<i>blanco</i> (<i>n</i> = 76)	<i>mezcla de blanco y negro</i> (<i>n</i> = 19)
Were you called insulting names by other kids because of your race/ethnicity?	30.4	30.6	22.8	28.9	36.8
Were you treated unfairly by a store clerk or security guard because of your race/ethnicity?	9.1	7.2	9.4	7.9	5.3
Were you hassled by the police because of your race/ethnicity?	4.8	3.9	4.7	2.6	5.3
Were you threatened by other kids because of your race/ethnicity?	5.4	4.4	5.4	6.7	0.0
Were you put in a lower ability class or group because of your race/ethnicity?	4.3	3.9	5.4	2.6	5.3
Did people act like they were suspicious of you because of your race/ethnicity?	11.5	11.1	10.1	6.6	15.8
Were you disciplined unfairly or given school detention because of your race/ethnicity?	3.1	3.9	2.7	0.0	5.3
Were you given a lower grade than you deserved because of your race/ethnicity?	3.0	2.8	3.4	1.3	10.5
Did other kids exclude you from their activities because of your race/ethnicity?	7.8	8.4	3.4	5.3	15.8
Did you get poor service at a restaurant because of your race/ethnicity?	3.9	3.9	4.0	1.3	5.3
Did other kids assume you speak or express yourself poorly because of your race/ethnicity?	11.7	11.2	11.4	7.9	15.8

Note. *N*=462. Adolescents from ethnic-racial groups comprising less than 4.0% of the study sample are not included separately in the table due to smaller group sizes: *mezcla de blanco e indígena* (*n*=7), *afrodescendiente* (*n*=6), *negro* (*n*=5), *indígena* (*n*=4), or another designation (e.g., *mestizo y Latino*; *blanco y Latino*, etc.; *n*=14).

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics and Bivariate Correlations Among Study Variables

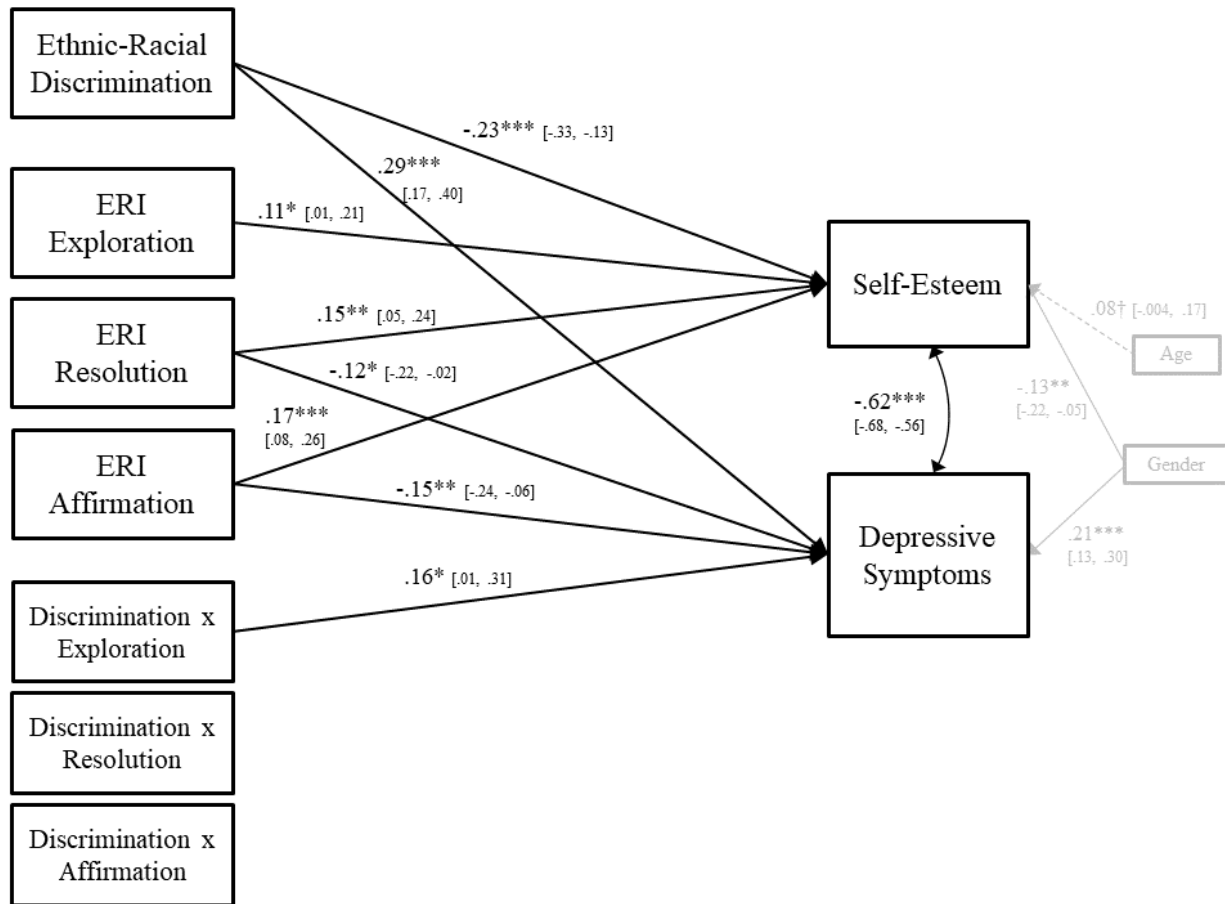
	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Range
1. Self-esteem	--							3.18	0.59	1.20 – 4.00
2. Depressive symptoms	-.66***	--						18.84	11.02	0.00 – 52.00
3. Ethnic-racial discrimination	-.20***	.21***	--					1.15	0.39	1.00 – 4.82
4. Ethnic-racial identity exploration	.15**	-.03	.05	--				1.80	0.72	1.00 – 4.00
5. Ethnic-racial identity resolution	.19***	-.11*	.001	.48***	--			2.59	0.83	1.00 – 4.00
6. Ethnic-racial identity affirmation	.17***	-.16**	-.13**	-.13**	-.06	--		3.62	0.58	1.00 – 4.00
7. Age	.05	-.01	.08	.03	-.05	-.04	--	15.90	1.15	13.00 – 19.24
8. Gender	-.12*	.18***	-.13**	-.09*	-.10*	.06	.02	.47 ^a		

Note. *N*=462. Self-esteem: 1=strongly disagree to 4=strongly agree. Depressive symptoms (sum score): 0=rarely or none of the time to 3=most of the time. Ethnic-racial discrimination: 1=never to 5=a whole lot. Ethnic-racial identity: 1=does not describe me at all to 4=Describes me very well. Age in years. Gender: 1=female, 0=male. ^aProportion of sample.

p*<.05. *p*<.01. ****p*<.001.

Figure 1

Multivariate Path Analysis Model of Ethnic-Racial Discrimination, Ethnic-Racial Identity (ERI), and Psychosocial Adjustment

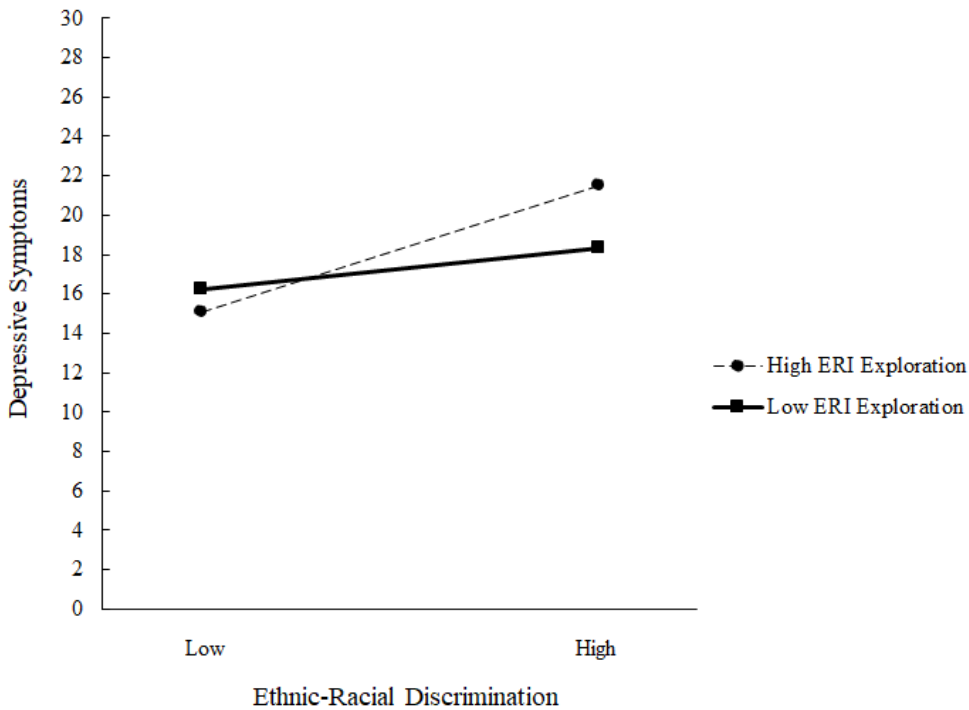


Note. $N=462$. $\chi^2(1)=0.12$, $p>.05$. RMSEA=.000, 90% CI [.000–.087]. CFI=1.000. SRMR=.002. R^2 self-esteem=.139. R^2 depressive symptoms=.145. Predictors grandmean centered. Path estimates are standardized beta weights, and thus can be interpreted as the expected change in the outcome variable in standard deviation units for a 1 SD increase in the predictor. 95% CI reported in brackets. Non-significant paths ($p > .10$) omitted from figure. Covariances among exogenous variables were estimated but omitted from figure. Gender: 1=female, 0=male. Covariance between covariates fixed to zero due to non-significance. ERI = ethnic-racial identity.

† $p<.10$. * $p<.05$. ** $p<.01$. *** $p<.001$.

Figure 2

Association Between Ethnic-Racial Discrimination and Depressive Symptoms Varies by Ethnic-Racial Identity (ERI) Exploration



Note. Simple slopes at low (-1 SD) and high ($+1$ SD) ethnic-racial identity (ERI) exploration. Slopes statistically significant, $p < .05$. Low ethnic-racial discrimination = *never* in last year. High ethnic-racial discrimination = $+1$ SD from mean, between *never* and *once or twice* in last year (average of 11 items).