Coalescing Race, Ethnicity, and Culture To Inform Research on US Latinx Youth

Selena Carbajal[1], Katharine H. Zeiders[1], Ada Wilkinson-Lee[1], Lindsay T. Hoyt[2], & Antoinette M. Landor[3]

University of Arizona[1], Fordham University[2], University of Missouri[3]

Background

Race, Ethnicity, and Culture During Adolescence
Extensive research has examined racial experiences (e.g., microaggressions; Huynh, 2012), ethnicity (e.g., ethnic identity; Umaña-Taylor et al., 2014), and culture (e.g., biculturalism; Safa & Umaña-Taylor, 2021) among youths of color, but little research has examined them concurrently.
- It is important to highlight how youths **feel** and **think** about race, ethnicity, and culture during adolescence when they have increased social-cognitive maturity to negotiate and internalize such experiences (Umaña-Taylor et al., 2014), especially for US Latinx youth who have racialized experiences relating to their ethnicity and culture (Martínez & Gonzalez, 2021).

How Microaggressions, Ethnic Identity (EI), and Biculturalism Co-Occur
Prior theory work suggests that affect (e.g., feelings) and cognition (e.g., thoughts) in EI and biculturalism may differentiate due to racial experiences (García Coll et al., 1996).
- Affect in EI, such as affirmation (feelings toward our ethnic group), but not cognition, such as resolution (certainty about our ethnic group), has been found to be lower for youth who are perceived *by others* as less Latinx appearing (Gonzales-Backen & Umaña-Taylor, 2011).
- Prior work suggests that when youth are in inhibiting environments (e.g., racism and discrimination), they may not develop biculturalism (Gusman et al., 2023).

Current Study
Scant research has examined how youth feel and think about EI and biculturalism within the context of racial invalidation or overemphasis via microaggressions (García Coll et al., 1996; Huynh, 2012). Thus, we used a person-centered approach to configure microaggressions (Denial of Racial Reality & Emphasis on Differences), EI (Affirmation & Resolution), and biculturalism (Bicultural Comfort & Bicultural Advantages) among US Latinx youth.
- We explored whether microaggressions, where youth are seen as inherently different by race (emphasis on differences) by others, also co-occurred with lower biculturalism across affect (feeling comfort) and cognition (perceiving advantages; Basilio et al., 2014).
- We explored whether microaggressions, where youth experience invalidation about racial experiences (denial of racial reality), also co-occurred with lower affirmation.

Methods

Procedure and Sample
- 230 Latinx youth from a Southwestern metropolitan area completed an online survey (English/Spanish) for $25.
- Youth were about 14 years old (SD = 0.1), identified as boys (47.4%), girls (47.4%) or gender diverse (3.9%), and mostly US-born (94.8%).

Measures
- **Microaggressions:** Denial of Racial Reality (3-item) & Emphasis on Differences (4-item) subscales – EMA Scale (α = .86, .87; Huynh, 2012).
- **EI:** Affirmation & Resolution 3-item subscales – EIS (α = .70, .88; Umaña-Taylor et al., 2004).
- **Biculturalism:** Bicultural Comfort & Advantages 9-item subscales – MABS (α =.88, .90; Basilio et al., 2014).

Analyses
- We conducted latent profile analyses (LPA in MPLUS) and identified a 4-profile solution (see Figure 1) based on information criteria tests (see Table 1).

Table 1
Model Fit Criteria for Latent Profile Analysis (N = 230)

Solution	AIC	BIC	ABIC	Entropy	LMRT
1-profile	3266.87	3308.13	3270.10		
2-profile	3044.20	3109.53	3049.31	0.93	0.00
3-profile	2893.94	2983.33	2900.92	0.95	0.30
4-profile	**2757.55**	**2871.01**	**2766.42**	**0.95**	**0.01**
5-profile	2637.30	2774.83	2648.05	0.97	0.45

Note. AIC = Akaike Information Criteria; BIC = Bayesian Information Criteria; ABIC = Adjusted Bayesian Information Criteria; LMRT = Lo-Mendell-Rubin Test. For the AIC, BIC, and ABIC indices, a lower value represents better fit; for Entropy, a higher value represents better fit; and a significant LMRT indicates that the model with k profiles is a better fitting model than a model with k-1 profiles.
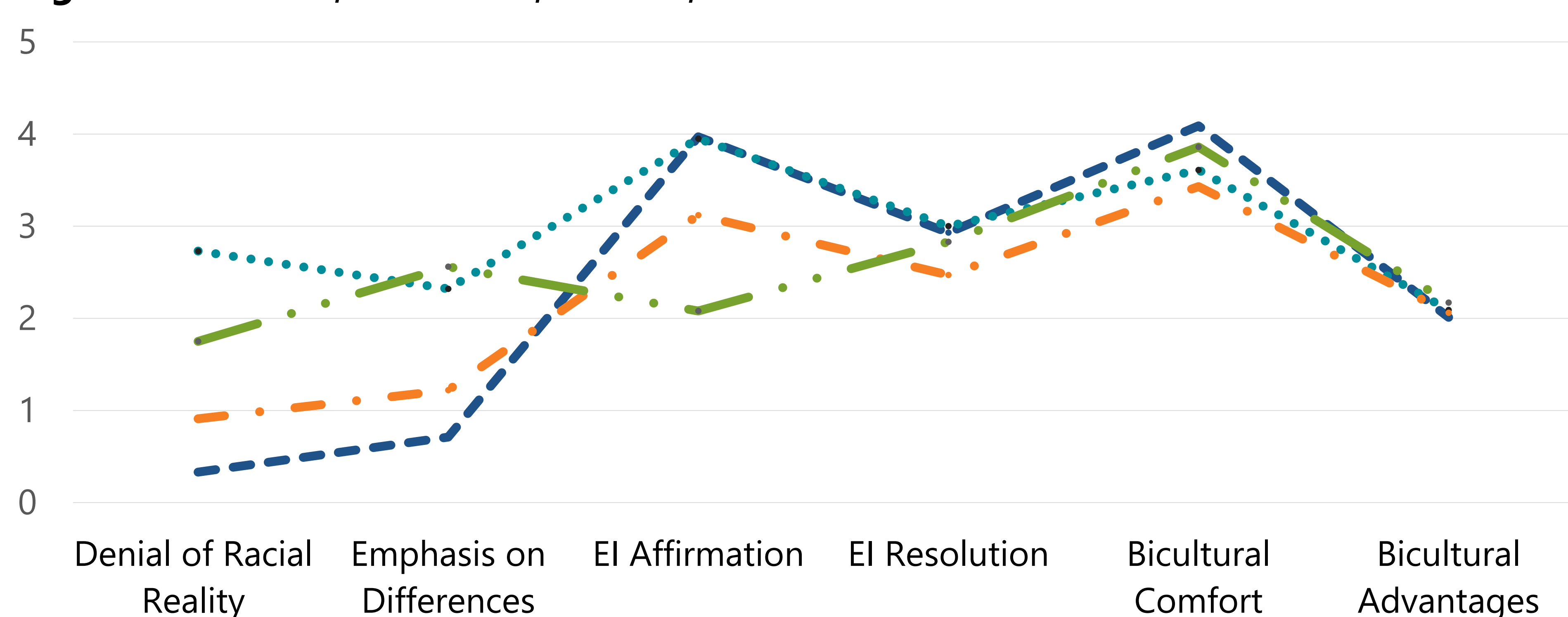
Discussion

Profile Highlights
1. **High EI & Biculturalism, Rare Microaggressions** (n = 167; 72.6%): Youth had the fewest microaggressions and highest EI and bicultural comfort.
   → Promotive environments are most conducive to EI and biculturalism (García Coll et al., 1996; Gusman et al., 2023).
2. **High EI Affirmation & Moderate-High EI Resolution, Moderate-High Biculturalism, Few Microaggressions** (n = 19; 8.3%): Youth with the second-fewest microaggressions had somewhat high EI resolution, high EI affirmation, and lower bicultural comfort.
   → Even few microaggressions co-occur with positive, but less clear EI and moderate biculturalism (García Coll et al., 1996).
3. **High EI & Moderate-High Biculturalism, Frequent Denial Microaggressions** (n = 40; 17.4%): Youth faced the most denial of racial reality microaggressions, high reports of EI, and lower bicultural comfort.
   → Youth may have felt rather positively about EI and biculturalism because they saw racism relating to US racial categories (e.g., white, black), not their racial categories (i.e., pan-ethnic, national origin; Martínez & Gonzalez, 2021).
4. **Moderate EI Affirmation & High EI Resolution, High Biculturalism, Frequent Difference Microaggressions** (n = 4; 1.7%): Youth faced the most emphasis on differences microaggressions, had the lowest EI affirmation, and second-highest bicultural comfort.
   → Youth felt negative about their EI when treated as racial others or foreigners; perhaps youths' EI became a reminder of their minoritized status in the US (García Coll et al., 1996).
   → In line with theory and qualitative work, biculturalism is complex: positive with underlying negative EI aspects (García Coll et al., 1996; McCarty et al., 2023; McKenzie et al., 2023).

Implications
- Our findings elucidate nuanced affect and cognition in EI and biculturalism across differing microaggressions suggesting the importance of researching multiple, related concepts for youths of color (García Coll et al., 1996).

Limitations and Future Directions
- Our analyses were cross-sectional; future work should examine developmental trajectories of youth's EI and biculturalism within the context of microaggressions and their joint influence on youths' adjustment.
- Future work should include structural and sociodemographic variables (e.g., structural discrimination, skin tone, phenotype) to highlight the diversity of Latinx youth and their contexts.

Results

Figure 1. *Means of Indicators for 4-Profile Solution*

- High EI & Biculturalism, Rare Microaggressions (n = 167)
- High EI & Moderate-High Biculturalism, Frequent Denial Microaggressions (n = 40)
- High EI Affirmation & Moderate-High EI Resolution, Moderate-High Biculturalism, Few Microaggressions (n = 19)
- Moderate EI Affirmation & High EI Resolution, High Biculturalism, Frequent Difference Microaggressions (n = 4)

Note. No significant mean-level differences in bicultural advantages emerged; thus, profile naming did not reference this indicator. Profile membership did not differ by gender [χ^2 (3) = 1.70, p = .64] or nativity [χ^2 (4) = 5.19, p = .27].

COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE & LIFE SCIENCES
Norton School of Human Ecology

Frances McClelland Institute Children, Youth, and Families

MU Mizzou University of Missouri

FORDHAM UNIVERSITY THE JESUIT UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

A PDF version of this academic poster is available at: http://fmi.arizona.edu/posters