

Microaggressions and Self-Esteem in Emerging Asian American Adults: The Moderating Role of Racial Socialization

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The current study explores the moderating role of racial socialization in the relation between experiences of racial microaggressions and individual self-esteem and racial microaggressions and collective self-esteem for Asian American emerging adults. Asian American emerging adults ($M_{\text{age}} = 23.83$ years, $SD = 2.83$; $N = 87$) completed the Racial and Ethnic Microaggression Scale, the Perceived Racial Socialization Scale, the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, and the Collective Self-Esteem Scale. Results suggest a negative correlation between racial microaggression experiences with both individual self-esteem, $r = -.34$, $p = .001$ and public self-esteem, $r = -.35$, $p = .001$, a component of collective self-esteem. Depending on type and level of message, racial socialization may serve as a protective factor in racial microaggressions and self-esteem relations. Specifically, results suggest a significant interaction when promotion of mistrust was tested as a moderator of the microaggressions–individual self-esteem relation ($b = .063$, $SE = .026$), $t(86) = 2.47$, $p = .015$, where the relation between microaggressions and self-esteem was only significant at low and moderate levels of promotion of mistrust. Promotion of mistrust also moderated the microaggressions–private self-esteem relation ($b = .045$, $SE = .02$), $t(86) = 2.30$, $p = .024$. However, when promotion of mistrust moderated this relation, the relation was nonsignificant at all levels (low, moderate, and high). An examination of simple slopes suggests a change in the direction of the relation between microaggressions and private self-esteem from negative for low and moderate levels of promotion of mistrust to positive for high levels of promotion of mistrust.

What is the public significance of this article?

The current study explores the moderating (i.e., buffering) role of racial socialization in the relation between experiences of racial microaggressions and individual self-esteem and racial microaggressions and collective self-esteem for Asian American emerging adults. The results of this study suggest that depending on type and level of message, racial socialization may serve as a protective factor in microaggressions and self-esteem relations.

Keywords: Asian American, microaggressions, racial socialization, self-esteem, emerging adult

Existing literature has indicated a close relationship between racial discrimination and various psychological constructs for Asian Americans (Huynh, 2012) including self-esteem (e.g., Han & Lee, 2011; Hwang & Goto, 2008). The negative correlation between racial discrimination and self-esteem appears to hold even

when a subtle form of racism known as racial microaggressions is measured (Nadal, Wong, Griffin, Davidoff, & Sriken, 2014). The relation between racial discrimination and self-esteem becomes more complex as different types of self-esteem are considered.

Research has indicated that for individuals socialized in both Western and Asian cultures, collective self-esteem appears to be relevant in addition to the commonly measured individual self-esteem (Tawa & Suyemoto, 2010). Collective self-esteem is a group-oriented self-esteem that is comprised of the knowledge, value, and emotional significance individuals attribute to their social group (Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992). The strength and direction of the relation between racial discrimination and collective self-esteem depend on which subscale of collective self-esteem is used with different groups of Asian Americans. For example, in research with Korean and Korean American college students, perceived discrimination was positively correlated with the mem-

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bership subscale (i.e., feelings about social group membership) of the Collective Self-Esteem Scale (Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992; Oh, 2001). In a different study with a diverse sample of Asian Americans, a negative correlation was found between *public collective self-esteem* (i.e., how participants perceive others to feel about their Asian American racial group) and perceived interpersonal racism (Barry & Grilo, 2003). Similarly, a negative relationship between public collective self-esteem and racism-related stress was found in an Asian American sample (Liang & Fassinger, 2008). More recently, however, Tawa, Suyemoto, and Roemer (2012) found in a sample of Asian Americans no relation between perceived *interpersonal* racism and any subscales of the Collective Self-Esteem Scale, whereas perceived *structural* racism was positively correlated with both the total Collective Self-Esteem Scale score and the scores from two Collective Self-Esteem Scale subscales (Private Self-Esteem and Importance to Identity).

These inconclusive results suggest that psychologists and researchers do not know under what circumstances or for whom the relation between racial discrimination and self-esteem holds. Therefore, in this study, we aim to extend the literature by testing whether a moderator, racial socialization, can explain when the relation between these two variables can be expected. Furthermore, psychologists currently have limited information about the relation between the specific form of racial discrimination measured in the current study, racial microaggressions, and the other variables in the current study. Understanding the role of racial microaggressions specifically might prove helpful because of the potentially greater likelihood of internalizing messages conveyed through mechanisms more subtle and chronic and less clear than more acute, “old-fashioned” forms of racial discrimination (Pierce, 1995; Solórzano, Ceja, & Yosso, 2000; Kohli & Solórzano, 2012; Sue et al., 2007). For those in practice, being able to anticipate what variables might act as buffers in the racial microaggressions–self-esteem relation might make it possible to build the repertoire of coping strategies available to their clients.

Conceptual Framework of the Present Study

To explore the relationship between microaggression experiences and self-esteem (both individual and collective) in Asian Americans, we applied a conceptual framework that incorporates a potential moderator termed *racial socialization*: the process of deliberately or implicitly imparting information about race, ethnicity, cultural values, attitudes, customs, and roles to younger generations (Bowman & Howard, 1985; Hughes & Johnson, 2001). Scholars suggest many racial minority families practice racial socialization to raise awareness and provide coping mechanisms for racial discrimination (e.g., Bowman & Howard, 1985; Brown & Ling, 2012). However, the potential link between racial socialization and racial microaggressions has only been studied once (Ajayi & Syed, 2014) in Asian Americans. This may be in part because of the potentially unique skills needed to teach awareness of and resistance to internalization of this form of racism, in comparison to old-fashioned, more blatant forms of racial discrimination (Solórzano et al., 2000; Sue et al., 2007). In the present study we view racial socialization as a protective factor in the microaggression and self-esteem relationship among Asian Americans.

Research on Racial Socialization

Hughes et al. (2006) conducted a review of literature on racial socialization and highlighted four themes: *cultural socialization*, *promotion of mistrust*, *preparation for bias*, and *egalitarianism*. In the present study, we will focus on cultural socialization, promotion of mistrust, and preparation for bias. Cultural socialization is the use of socialization messages to teach children about their racial/ethnic history, customs, or traditions (Hughes & Chen, 1997). Promotion of mistrust includes messages that encourage wariness in interracial interactions and teaches children about racial barriers to success (Hughes & Chen, 1997; Hughes et al., 2006). Preparation for bias messages encourages individuals to anticipate racial discrimination by increasing awareness of potential discriminatory events (Hughes & Johnson, 2001).

Hughes et al.’s (2006) review of racial socialization research indicated its focused application to African Americans. The process of racial socialization plays an important role in African American children’s identity development (Neblett et al., 2008; Wang & Huguley, 2012) and can buffer the negative effects of racial discrimination on psychological adjustment and self-esteem (e.g., Bynum, Burton, & Best, 2007; Neblett et al., 2008). Applying racial socialization theory to Asian Americans, Tran and Lee (2010) found that Asian Americans report receiving a broad range of racial socialization messages. Tran and Lee stated the percentages of perceived racial discrimination in their study were similar to or greater than those reported for African and Latino American samples in other studies (see Caughy, O’Campo, Randolph, & Nickerson, 2002; Hughes & Chen, 1999). Other studies with Asian Americans largely confirm findings from African American–focused research, specifically that racial socialization positively correlates with a host of positive outcomes such as strong parent-child relationships and self-esteem (Brown & Ling, 2012; Yoon, 2004) and coping strategies (Tummala-Narra, Inman, & Ettigi, 2011).

Recently, Liu and Lau (2013) investigated the relation between racial socialization and depressive symptoms in a mixed sample of African American, Asian American, and Latino/a young adults. The study indicated a negative association between cultural socialization and depression whereas preparation for bias and promotion of mistrust were positively associated with depression. These scholars suggested that racial minority children who were exposed to cultural socialization had a more optimistic outlook on life, which mediated the relationship between racism and depressive symptoms. On the other hand, those who were exposed to preparation for bias and promotion of mistrust had a more pessimistic outlook on life, and therefore, greater instances of depression and depressive symptoms. Results specific to each type of racial socialization for Asian Americans are reviewed below.

Cultural Socialization

Researchers have found that use of cultural socialization decreases one’s susceptibility to the negative effects of racial discrimination (Neblett et al., 2008). Messages of cultural socialization have been found to moderate the relation between perceived discrimination and psychological distress, such that individuals receiving lower levels of cultural socialization were more distressed when they experienced racial discrimination, compared to those who received more cultural socialization messages (Sellers

& Shelton, 2003). The positive link between cultural socialization and self-esteem was also found; more messages of cultural socialization are associated with a decrease in the negative effects of racial discrimination on self-esteem (Constantine & Blackmon, 2002). Research has also established a positive association between cultural socialization and collective self-esteem in transracially adopted Korean children (Yoon, 2004).

Promotion of Mistrust

Research indicates that promotion of mistrust messages are negatively associated with psychological health (Bynum et al., 2007; Huynh & Fuligni, 2008). Promotion of mistrust is also correlated with lower self-esteem (Bynum et al., 2007) and more depressive symptoms (Liu & Lau, 2013); however, these relations may be temporary as Gartner, Kiang, and Supple (2014) found that these messages did not have a longitudinal effect on psychological well-being.

Preparation for Bias

Research on preparation for bias is mixed. Some studies suggest preparation for bias is positively related to psychological functioning, including fewer depressive symptoms in African American adolescents (Bowman & Howard, 1985). Yet, other research suggests preparation for bias is negatively associated with psychological health in African American adolescents (Stevenson, Reed, & Bodison, 1996) and that such messages relate to more depressive symptoms with a mixed sample of African American, Asian American, and Latino/a young adults (Liu & Lau, 2013). Furthermore, Harris-Britt, Valrie, Kurtz-Costes, and Rowley (2007) suggested a curvilinear correlational relationship between preparation for bias and self-esteem; moderate levels of preparation for bias were associated with higher levels of individual self-esteem whereas extremely high or low levels of preparation for bias were negatively associated with individual self-esteem.

Given the overview of racial socialization research, we generated the following hypotheses in our study on the relation between perceived microaggressions and self-esteem (both individual and collective) in Asian Americans emerging adults. This study focused on emerging adults because this time has been identified as the most self-focused period of identity exploration (Arnett, 2004) and is viewed as critical for ethnic identity exploration with unique contextual factors shaping this process (Phinney, 2006).

Hypotheses

There will be a significant negative correlation between perceived racial microaggression experiences and self-esteem (both individual and collective). Particular types of racial socialization (i.e., cultural socialization and promotion of mistrust) would act as a moderator in the relation between perceptions of racial microaggressions and both individual and the collective self-esteem. More specifically, when there were more messages of cultural socialization, the relation between microaggressions and individual and cultural self-esteem would be weakened compared to when reports of cultural socialization messages were lower. However, when reports of promotion of mistrust were higher, the relation between microaggressions and self-esteem would be stronger than

when reports of promotion of mistrust were lower. Because of the conflicting research of the exact role of preparation for bias, we performed analyses to explore the relations between preparation for bias and other study variables.

Method

Participants

Participants in the present study were 18- to 29-year-old self-identified Asian Americans with at least one Asian American grandparent or two biracial Asian American grandparents. Participants were recruited through multiple methods: (a) e-mailing universities in the mid-Atlantic region, (b) e-mailing the membership listservs of Divisions 17 (Society of Counseling Psychology) and Division 45 (Society for the Psychological Study of Culture, Ethnicity, and Race) of the American Psychological Association and the membership listserv of the Asian American Psychological Association (AAPA), (c) Amazon's Mechanical Turk (MTurk, an online system in which participants are paid small amounts to complete tasks), and (d) snowball sampling, where recruited individuals forwarded the e-mails to individuals who fit the criteria (i.e., self-identified Asian American between the ages of 18–29).

A total of 87 participants remained from the original of 108 respondents after eliminating cases with over 20% missing data on any scales. We included participants who were missing less than 20% of the data in our analysis. According to Parent (2013) when few item-level values were missing, it is better to use available-item analysis than to use mean substitution or multiple imputations because it reduces the potential for bias. This is especially true for data that is based on computing scale scores. The mean age was 23.83 years ($SD = 2.83$). Fifty-two participants identified as women, one participant identified as transgender, and two participants did not provide gender. The top five representative countries of origin were China ($n = 18$), Korea ($n = 13$), Philippines ($n = 13$), Vietnam ($n = 9$), and Japan ($n = 6$), followed by India ($n = 5$), Taiwan ($n = 3$), Russia ($n = 2$), Bangladesh ($n = 1$), Hong Kong ($n = 1$), Indonesia ($n = 1$), Laos ($n = 1$), Malaysia ($n = 1$), and Thailand ($n = 1$). Some participants also identified as multi-racial ($n = 8$) and 4 participants did not provide a country of origin. Most of the participants identified as second generation Asian American ($n = 57$), followed by first generation ($n = 14$), third generation ($n = 8$), and then fourth and above generations ($n = 8$).

Procedure and Measures

Potential participants received an e-mail through various recruitment methods. The e-mail contained a cover page that explained the purpose of the study along with a link to an online survey through Qualtrics.com. By clicking the link, they were introduced to the informed consent. Those who agreed to participate in the study were directed to click "agree," which led them to the demographic questions and the instruments listed in Measures. The order of measure presentation was counterbalanced. The survey took approximately 15–20 min to complete.

Racial and Ethnic Microaggressions Scale. To assess participants' perceptions of racial and ethnic microaggressions, the 45-item Racial and Ethnic Microaggression Scale (REMS; Nadal,

2011) was used. The scale guided participants to indicate if they experienced a microaggression within the past 6 months on a dichotomous scale (0 = *I did not experience this event* and 1 = *I experienced this event at least once*). Cronbach's alpha was .88 in the original scale development work that included 34% self-identified Asian Americans/Pacific Islanders community members whose age ranged from 18 to 66 years old (Nadal, 2011) and was .89 in the present study. Validity of the REMS was supported with a confirmatory factor analysis and the positive correlations between the measure and two self-report measures of perceptions of racism (Nadal, 2011). Respondents in the present study reported a mean score of 12.54 ($SD = 7.93$) for the REMS, with possible scores ranging from 0 to 45 and an actual range of 0 to 32 in the present study.

Perceived Racial Socialization Scale. The present study used Tran and Lee's (2010) 16-item adapted version of Hughes and Johnson's (2001) Perceived Racial Socialization Scale. The scale was designed to assess racial socialization practices over the past year and over the course of a lifetime. The response format for lifetime experience is dichotomous in nature (0 = *no*, 1 = *yes*), while the past 12-month experience uses a 5-point Likert-type scale (1 = *never*, 5 = *often*). The range of scores for this scale is 16 to 80, with higher scores indicating more messages of racial socialization from parents. Tran and Lee (2010) reported an overall Cronbach's alpha of .88 for responses to the revised scale adapted for Asian American late adolescents. They reported an $\alpha = .85$ for the Preparation for Bias subscale (eight items), $\alpha = .80$ for the Cultural Socialization subscale (five items), and $\alpha = .74$ for the Promotion of Mistrust subscale (three items). In the present study there was an alpha of .81 for the Cultural Socialization subscale, with scores ranging from 8 to 24 (possible range 5–25; $M = 15.31$, $SD = 4.45$). Cronbach's alpha for the Preparation for Bias subscale was $\alpha = .78$, with scores ranged from 8 to 37 out of a possible 8 to 40 ($M = 21.71$, $SD = 8.26$). Cronbach's alpha was .82 for the Promotion of Mistrust subscale with possible and actual scores ranging from 3 to 15 ($M = 7.08$, $SD = 3.11$). Validity was supported in the conceptually consistent relations between variables in previous research (Brown & Ling, 2012; Tran & Lee, 2010).

Individual Self-Esteem Scale. Rosenberg's (1965) 10-item, 4-point Likert-type scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 4 = *strongly agree*) was used to measure individual self-esteem. Higher scores indicate higher self-esteem. This scale has been used with diverse Asian American samples, with a mean age of 21.34 years ($SD = 1.74$ years) from countries of origins in China, Vietnam, Philippines, Taiwan, Japan, Hong Kong, Thailand, Cambodia, and Laos, with reported Cronbach's alphas around .90 (Brown & Ling, 2012; Lee, 2005). In the present study the coefficient alpha was .89. Actual scores in the present study ranged from 14 to 40 (out of a possible 10 to 40) with a mean of 29.43 ($SD = 6.06$). Validity of the conclusions made with this scale are supported by conceptually consistent relations with other variables (Gray-Little, Williams, & Hancock, 1997).

Collective Self-Esteem Scale. For collective self-esteem, Luhtanen and Crocker's (1992) 16-item measure of collective self-esteem was used. The scale uses a 7-point Likert scale (1 = *strongly agree*; 7 = *strongly disagree*) for four different four-item subscales: (a) Membership Collective Self-Esteem (participants' feelings about their membership in their social group), (b) Private

Collective Self-Esteem (participants' general evaluation of their social group), (c) Public Collective Self-Esteem (participants' assessments of others' perceptions of their social group), and (d) Importance to Identity (significance of participants' social group to their identity; Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992). The total score ranges from 16 to 112 with scores of 4 to 28 for each subscale. Higher scores represent greater collective self-esteem. Previous research with a diverse Asian American college student sample yielded Cronbach's alphas of .83 for the overall scale with .64 for Membership Collective Self-Esteem, .74 for Private Collective Self-Esteem, .51 for Public Collective Self-Esteem, and .73 for Importance to Identity subscales (Tawa et al., 2012).

In the present study, the Membership Self-Esteem subscale actual range was 10 to 28 ($M = 19.72$, $SD = 4.94$). Actual scores ranged from 6 to 28 for the Private Self-Esteem subscale ($M = 21.91$, $SD = 4.61$), 8 to 25 for the Public Self-Esteem subscale ($M = 17.99$, $SD = 4.35$), and 6 to 28 ($M = 18.39$, $SD = 5.14$) for the Importance to Identity subscale. In the present study, the Cronbach's alpha was .78 for Membership Self-Esteem, .78 for Private Self-Esteem, .73 for Public Self-Esteem, and .80 for Importance to Identity subscale.

Validity for the Collective Self-Esteem Scale was supported in the conceptually consistent relations between collective self-esteem and other variables such as individual self-esteem and collectivism (Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992).

Data Analyses

Using SPSS 21, various descriptive analyses were conducted on participants' demographic characteristics and the measures described above. The PROCESS procedure for SPSS Release 2.13, developed by Hayes (2013), was used to conduct hierarchical regression analyses for our main hypotheses where racial microaggressions was the predictor, self-esteem was the outcome variable, and racial socialization was the moderator.

A power analysis was conducted using SPSS Sample Power to estimate the number of participants needed (Borenstein, Hedges, Rothstein, Cohen, & Schoenfeld, 2010) to find a significant result. To achieve a power of .80, with an estimate of a small effect size ($r^2 = .01$) for the main effect, the moderator, and the interaction and an alpha level of .05 (two-tailed) a sample of 357 will be required. To achieve a power of .80, with an estimate of a medium effect size ($r^2 = .09$) for the main effect, the moderator, and the interaction and an alpha level of .05 (two-tailed), a sample size of 41 participants will be required. Although we do not have sufficient power to detect a small effect size, we do have sufficient power to detect a medium to large effect size.

Independent *t* tests were conducted to determine if group differences existed between participants recruited from MTurk and those recruited from other methods including Asian American student organizations, AAPA Listservs, and snowball sampling. Differences in Preparation for Bias, $t(81) = 2.92$, $p = .004$, Cultural Socialization, $t(81) = .98$, $p = .019$, Public Self-Esteem, $t(81) = -2.13$, $p = .036$, and Importance to Identity, $t(81) = -3.13$, $p = .002$, were found, such that individuals who were recruited from Asian American organizations had higher reports of two racial socialization subscales: Preparation for Bias and Cultural Socialization and two collective self-esteem subscales: Public Self-Esteem and Importance to Identity. Therefore, our results may have been influenced by the differences

between these two groups. These differences will be explored in the discussion section.

Results

Table 1 presents correlation analyses for experiences of racial microaggressions, racial socialization, and the measures of individual and collective self-esteem. For our overall hypotheses, we found a significant and negative correlation between REMS and the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, $r = -.34, p = .001$. The REMS was also significantly and negatively correlated with the Public Self-Esteem subscale of the Collective Self-Esteem Scale, $r = -.35, p = .001$, but not with the Membership Self-Esteem, Private Self-Esteem, or Importance to Identity subscales. When testing moderation hypotheses, support depended on the type of racial socialization and self-esteem.

Racial Socialization Moderating the Microaggressions–Individual Self-Esteem Relation

Results suggest that the ability of racial socialization to moderate the racial microaggressions – self-esteem relation depends on the type of racial socialization measured.

Cultural socialization as a moderator. When analyzing the ability of cultural socialization to moderate the microaggressions–individual self-esteem relation, the overall model was significant, $R^2 = .15, F(3, 83) = 4.98, p = .0032$ (see Table 2). Experiences of racial microaggressions were a significant negative predictor for individual self-esteem, $b = -.29, SE = .08, t(86) = -3.65, p = .0005$. Cultural socialization, however, was not a significant predictor in this model. Furthermore, the interaction between racial microaggressions and cultural socialization was not a significant predictor of individual self-esteem.

Promotion of mistrust as a moderator. When analyzing the ability of promotion of mistrust to moderate the microaggressions–individual self-esteem relation, the overall model was significant, $R^2 = .20, F(3, 83) = 6.867, p = .0003$ (see Table 2). Experiences of racial microaggressions were a significant negative predictor for individual self-esteem, $b = -.24, SE = .084, t(86) = -2.91, p = .0046$. Promotion of mistrust, however, was not a significant predictor in this model, $b = -.30, SE = .21, p = .15$. The

Table 2

Racial Socialization Types as a Moderator for the Relation Between Experiences of Racial Microaggressions and Individual Self-Esteem

Model	Cultural Socialization		Promotion of Mistrust		Preparation for Bias	
	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>
Constant	29.27**	.62	28.79**	.64	29.28**	.63
REMS	-.29**	.08	-.24**	.084	-.25	.08
Racial Socialization type	.16	.14	-.30	.21	-.05**	.078
Interaction	.025	.017	.063*	.026	.01	.0093

Note. REMS = Racial and Ethnic Microaggression Scale.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

interaction term (Racial Microaggressions \times Promotion of Mistrust) was significant, $b = .063, SE = .026, t(86) = 2.47, p = .015$. At lower ($b = -3.11, SE = .13, p = .0008$) and moderate ($b = .0005, SE = .084, p = .0046$) levels of promotion of mistrust, a significant relation between racial microaggressions and self-esteem emerged, but not at high levels of promotion of mistrust ($b = 3.11, SE = .10, p = .65$; see Figure 1).

Preparation for bias as a moderator. In terms of the ability of preparation for bias to moderate the relation between experiences of racial microaggressions and individual self-esteem, the overall model was significant, $R^2 = .14, F(3, 83) = 4.37, p = .0066$ (see Table 2). Reported experiences of racial microaggression were a significant negative predictor in this model, $b = -.25, SE = .08, t(86) = -3.14, p < .05$. Preparation for bias, however, was not a significant predictor in this model. The interaction term (Racial Microaggression \times Preparation for Bias) was also not significant.

Racial Socialization Moderating the Microaggression–Collective Self Esteem Relation

As with individual self-esteem, results suggest that the ability of racial socialization to moderate the racial microaggressions – collective self-esteem relation depends on the type of racial socialization and the collective self-esteem subscale measured. Specifically, the ability of promotion of mistrust and prepara-

Table 1

Correlation Analysis for Experiences of Racial Microaggressions, Racial Socialization, and Measures of Self-Esteem (N = 87)

Measure	CS	PoM	PfB	RSE	M_CSE	Pri_CSE	Pu_CSE	Impt_CSE
REMS	.18	.41**	.39**	-.339**	-.031	-.167	-.347**	.098
CS	1	.13	.46**	.056	.035	-.088	-.060	.091
PoM		1	.35**	-.28**	-.19	-.37**	-.35**	.005
PfB			1	-.158	-.141	-.287**	-.047	-.033
RSE				1	.62**	.533**	.40**	.21*
M_CSE					1	.58**	.48**	.44**
Pri_CSE						1	.56**	.37**
Pu_CSE							1	.17

Note. REMS = Racial and Ethnic Microaggression Scale; CS = Cultural Socialization subscale; PoM = Promotion of Mistrust subscale; PfB = Preparation for Bias subscale; RSE = Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale; M_CSE = Membership Self-Esteem subscale; Pri_CSE = Private Self-Esteem subscale; Pu_CSE = Public Self-Esteem subscale; Impt_CSE = Importance to Identity subscale.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

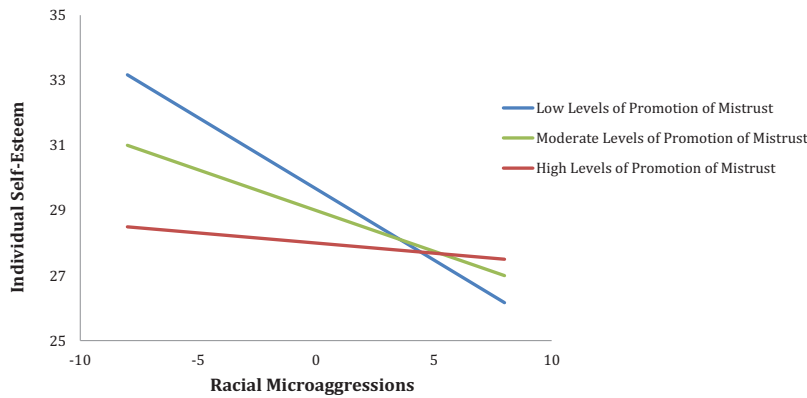


Figure 1. Interaction graph of promotion of mistrust moderating the relation between racial microaggressions and individual self-esteem. See the online article for the color version of this figure.

tion for bias to influence the relations between racial microaggressions and private and public self-esteem are worthy of a more thorough review in text. Other tests of moderation were nonsignificant and are presented in Table 3.

Promotion of mistrust as a moderator. In terms of the ability of promotion of mistrust to moderate the relation between experiences of racial microaggressions and private self-esteem, the overall model was significant, $R^2 = .19$, $F(3, 83) = 6.51$, $p = .0005$. Promotion of mistrust was a significant predictor for levels of private self-esteem, $b = -.52$, $SE = .16$, $t(86) = -3.22$, $p = .0018$. Reported experiences of racial microaggressions were not a

significant predictor in this model ($b = -.038$, $SE = .064$, $p = .55$). The interaction term (Racial Microaggressions \times Promotion of Mistrust) was significant, $b = .04$, $SE = .020$, $p = .024$. However, the relation between racial microaggressions and private self-esteem was nonsignificant at all levels of the moderator. Examination of Figure 2 suggests that the nonsignificant simple slopes is due to a “crossover interaction” where the direction of the relation between microaggressions and private self-esteem changed (i.e., it was negative at low and moderate levels of promotion of mistrust and positive at high levels of promotion of mistrust; VanderWeele & Knol, 2014).

Table 3
Racial Socialization Types as a Moderator for the Relation Between Experiences of Racial Microaggressions and Collective Self-Esteem

Model	Cultural Socialization		Promotion of Mistrust		Preparation for Bias	
	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>
M_CSE						
Constant	19.63**	.54	19.49**	.57	19.73**	.54
REMS	-.032	.069	.019	.075	-.0001	.069
Racial Socialization type	.045	.12	-.32	.19	-.085	.063
Interaction	.016	.015	.024	.023	-.0007	.0081
Pri_CSE						
Constant	21.88**	.50	21.45**	.49	21.89**	.49
REMS	-.093	.064	-.038	.064	-.066	.062
Racial Socialization type	-.062	.1136	-.52**	.16	-.15*	.060
Interaction	.0040	.0136	.040*	.020	.0011	.0072
Pu_CSE						
Constant	17.90**	.45	18.05**	.47	17.83**	.45
REMS	-.20**	.057	-.13*	.061	-.20**	.057
Racial Socialization type	.0015	.10	-.35*	.15	.029	.055
Interaction	.015	.012	-.0065	.019	.011	.0066
Impt_CSE						
Constant	18.14**	.57	18.37	.61	18.56**	.56
REMS	.056	.072	.073	.079	.079	.072
Racial Socialization type	.088	.13	-.07	.20	-.051	.069
Interaction	-.0037	.015	.0025	.024	-.013	.0083

Note. M_CSE = Membership Self-Esteem subscale; REMS = Racial and Ethnic Microaggression Scale; Pri_CSE = Private Self-Esteem subscale; Pu_CSE = Public Self-Esteem subscale; Impt_CSE = Importance to Identity subscale.
* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

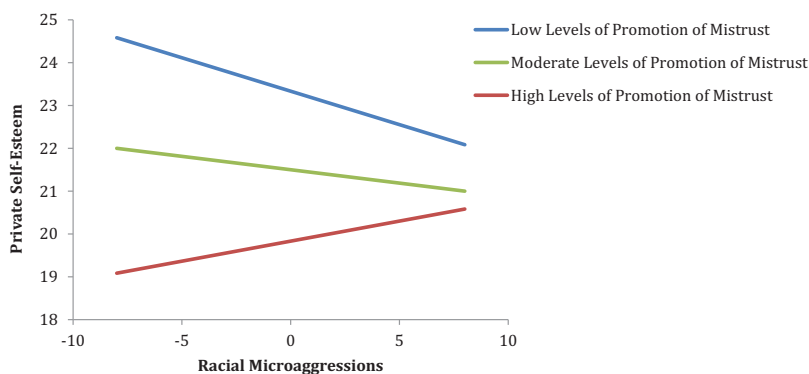


Figure 2. Interaction graph of promotion of mistrust moderating the relation between racial microaggressions and private self-esteem. See the online article for the color version of this figure.

The model including racial microaggressions as the predictor variable and public self-esteem as the outcome variable, with promotion of mistrust as the moderator, was significant, $R^2 = .17$, $F(3, 83) = 5.81$, $p = .0012$. Reported experiences of racial microaggressions were a significant predictor, $b = -0.13$, $SE = .061$, $t(86) = -2.12$, $p = .037$. Promotion of mistrust was also a significant predictor, $b = -.35$, $SE = .15$, $p = .024$. The interaction term was not significant.

Preparation for bias as a moderator. When the predictor variable was racial microaggressions and the outcome variable was public self-esteem, with preparation for bias as the moderator variable, the overall model was significant, $R^2 = .15$, $F(3, 83) = 4.93$, $p = .0034$. Reported experiences of racial microaggressions were a significant predictor for public self-esteem ($b = -.20$, $SE = .057$, $p = .007$), such that higher levels of racial microaggressions were associated with lower levels of public self-esteem. Preparation for bias was not a significant predictor. The interaction term was not significant in this model.

Exploratory Findings for the Role of the Racial Socialization as a Moderator

Given that researchers have stated the difficulty in finding interaction effects for nonexperimental studies (McClelland & Judd, 1993), additional analyses were conducted. Furthermore, the role of racial socialization in the relation between racial microaggressions and self-esteem had yet to be fully examined, thus we wished to determine if there were any additional findings. Our results indicated several partial effects, suggesting additional research is needed.

Promotion of mistrust. Although the model indicated that promotion of mistrust was not a significant moderator for the relation between racial microaggressions and public self-esteem, there were simple effects at differing levels of promotion of mistrust. At moderate levels ($b = .0005$, $SE = .061$), the relation between racial microaggressions and public self-esteem was significant, $p = .037$.

Preparation for bias. Although the results indicate the absence of a significant interaction for preparation for bias in the relation between experiences of racial microaggressions and individual self-esteem, indication of partial effects exists. At low and

moderate levels of preparation for bias, a significant relation between experiences of racial microaggression and individual self-esteem was found, $b = -8.26$, $SE = .11$, $p = .0041$, and $b = .0026$, $SE = .080$, $p = .0023$, respectively. However, this relation was no longer significant at higher levels of preparation for bias. There were also partial effects for preparation for bias in the relation between racial microaggressions and public self-esteem. At low and moderate levels of preparation for bias, the relation was significant, $b = -8.26$, $SE = .082$, $p = .0005$, and $b = .0026$, $SE = .057$, $p = .0007$, respectively.

Discussion

The current study is the first to investigate the relationships between racial microaggressions and two types of self-esteem among Asian American emerging adults. In our investigation, we were able to provide supportive evidence for the negative relation between experiences of racial microaggressions and psychological well-being, specifically individual self-esteem and the public self-esteem subscale of collective self-esteem. Furthermore, results of this study indicate that certain types of racial socialization messages may moderate the relation between racial microaggressions and self-esteem in Asian American emerging adults. The results of our exploratory findings were also presented and discussed.

Differences Between MTurk and E-mail Recruitment

The current study utilized multiple recruitment methods: MTurk, e-mail recruitment of various organizations (i.e., Asian American student organizations, Asian American professional psychological listservs), and snowball sampling. It is possible that the differences in collective self-esteem (higher public self-esteem, and importance to identity) and differences in racial socialization experiences may be due to the ethnic identity awareness within these two groups. Individuals who are part of Asian American organizations may be more aware of their ethnic identity, thus may be better able to actively recall experiences of racial socialization from their parents. Furthermore, Inkelas (2004) found a significant strong positive relation between membership in Asian/Pacific Islander student organizations and perceived gains in racial/ethnic awareness. The implication of these differences are further ex-

plored throughout our discussion. Due to the design of our study (cross-sectional self-report data) it is not possible to determine if individuals in the Asian American professional and student organizations received more racial socialization messages, thus leading to greater ethnic identity awareness and pride, which resulted in them seeking membership in these organizations. Further research on the role of racial socialization and ethnic identity development and ethnic identity pride in Asian American adults is needed, based on the group differences and results of the present study.

Relation Between Racial Microaggressions and Self-Esteem

The present study found a negative association between racial microaggressions and individual self-esteem. These significant negative correlations provide support for the notion that although racial microaggressions may appear to be innocuous, these perceived slights may be associated with lower self-esteem (Crocker & Major, 1989; Nadal et al., 2014; Sue et al., 2007). Thus, this study extends the literature on the relation between racial socialization and individual self-esteem to Asian American emerging adults.

Regarding collective self-esteem, the public aspect of collective self-esteem was the only component to correlate negatively with racial microaggressions. This ran contrary to our hypotheses. The reason for these findings may be attributed to the meaning of each of the components. Public self-esteem includes individuals' perception of others' evaluation of their social group (Crocker, Luhtanen, Blaine, & Broadnax, 1994). The other forms of collective self-esteem, on the other hand, are based on how individuals privately evaluate their social group, their value as a member to the group, and how important their social group is to their identity (Crocker et al., 1994). Therefore, these facets of collective self-esteem may not be as vulnerable to the influence of external perceptions transmitted through microaggressions.

It is also possible that experiences of racial microaggressions were not correlated with other forms of collective self-esteem because of the developmental stage of the participants in this study. During emerging adulthood, individuals are most likely to explore and develop their identity (Arnett, 2004). Experiences of discrimination may act as a catalyst for the development of an ethnic identity as a way to alleviate the potential negative effects of discrimination (Phinney, 1992). Furthermore, members of racial and ethnic organizations may differ in the frequency or intensity of racial microaggressions experiences because they have a greater awareness of racial and ethnic issues (Inkelas, 2004). If individuals do not perceive their ethnicity to be an important part of themselves, it may have little to no impact on their self-perception. In future studies, the developmental stage and level of ethnic identity should be considered when assessing self-esteem.

Finally, experiences of racial microaggressions might not have been associated with other facets of collective self-esteem due to sample characteristics. Many participants were recruited through contacting Asian American organizations at local universities, thus these individuals might have very positive perceptions of their racial and or ethnic group that are resistant to the experiences of racial microaggressions. Furthermore, it is possible that these individuals were more likely to externalize their experiences of racial microaggressions, which would potentially reduce the neg-

ative association with self-esteem. Crocker and Major (1989) suggested that individuals from marginalized groups might protect themselves from prejudice and discrimination by attributing negative statements or behavior to an external factors (e.g., systemic barriers) as a coping mechanism (Hammack, 2003; Sue & Sue, 2008). The use of externalization of racial discrimination may be part of a larger repertoire of coping strategies that racially marginalized individuals may use, such as joining an ethnic organization.

Although collective self-esteem has been identified as an important aspect of the self in East Asian populations (Crocker et al., 1994), to date only three studies have addressed the relation between perceived racism and collective self-esteem with Asian Americans (Barry & Grilo, 2003; Liang & Fassinger, 2008; Oh, 2001). Thus, the present study's findings extend the literature on this important area, indicating that perception of perceived racial microaggressions are negatively associated with public self-esteem in Asian American emerging adults.

Racial Socialization as a Moderator

Results of this study did not support cultural socialization and preparation for bias as moderators of the relation between racial microaggressions and self-esteem. However, promotion of mistrust functioned as a moderator in the relation between experiences of racial microaggressions and individual self-esteem. Specifically, the relation between microaggressions and individual self-esteem was significant and negative at low and moderate levels of promotion of mistrust but nonsignificant at high levels of promotion of mistrust. Promotion of mistrust also moderated the relation between experiences of racial microaggressions and private self-esteem. However, when promotion of mistrust moderated this relation, the relation was nonsignificant at all levels (low, moderate, and high) of the moderator. An examination of simple slopes suggests a change in direction of the relation between microaggressions and private self-esteem from negative for low and moderate levels of promotion of mistrust to positive for high levels of promotion of mistrust.

It is possible that this type of racial socialization was able to function as a moderator because statements made warning individuals of potential instances of racism may allow them to become aware of and then externalize negative experiences rather than internalize them. This would protect marginalized individuals by providing them with a mechanism to attribute negative feedback to the prejudice of others (Lee & Ahn, 2013; Liu & Lau, 2013) thereby placing the blame for the microaggression on society and racial disparities rather than perceiving the experience as due to a group deficit (Pascoe & Richman, 2009; Pinderhughes, 1989). This study also provides evidence that promotion of mistrust may have a significant long-term effect on individuals, as seen by the ability of this form of racial socialization to function as a moderator in Asian American emerging adults. However, the results of our study suggest that the greatest benefit of promotion of mistrust is seen at high levels where the relation between racial microaggressions and self-esteem weakens or even grows positive. This is consistent with research suggesting that adolescents whose parents deliver more messages regarding racism feel as if they have more control over experiences of discrimination (Scott, 2004).

Cultural socialization did not emerge as a significant moderator in the racial microaggressions–self-esteem relation. Research has suggested that messages reinforcing cultural pride are better able to act as a buffer to racial discrimination in children (Caughy et al., 2002) than in older individuals (Landrine & Klonoff, 1996). If cultural socialization messages are particularly vulnerable to decay over time, emerging adults might be particularly vulnerable to this decay because of the variety of new messages and message sources they are exposed to in this developmental period. As Asian American emerging adults age, simply being proud of one's cultural heritage might be insufficient in the interruption in the relation between racial microaggressions and self-esteem.

Additionally, limited research comparing the use of racial socialization messages across racial groups suggests that, in comparison to African American and Latin American mothers, Asian American mothers might be less likely to employ cultural socialization as a way to help integrate their children into American society (Hagelskamp & Hughes, 2014). Thus, relative ambivalence about the use of cultural socialization as a racial socialization strategy might translate into messages of cultural pride that are less convincing or salient and therefore, less effective.

Significance of Exploratory Findings

Our results indicated that preparation for bias did not emerge as a moderator in the relation between racial microaggressions and individual and collective self-esteem. However, it might be noteworthy that preparation for bias was a partial moderator in the relation between experiences of racial microaggressions and individual self-esteem and one facet of collective self-esteem, public self-esteem. Additionally, there were partial effects for promotion of mistrust as a moderator in the relation between racial microaggressions and public self-esteem. It is possible that our sample size failed to provide sufficient power to detect the overall effects for these forms of racial socialization as moderators, although it did have sufficient power to detect the effects for different levels of the racial socialization variables. It is important to note that other studies have indicated that preparation for bias, specifically, serves as a protective factor for experiences of discrimination (Constantine & Blackmon, 2002; Hughes & Johnson, 2001; Neblett et al., 2008). Thus, the results of the present study provide tentative support that preparation for bias is a protective factor for the relation between experiences of racial microaggressions and self-esteem in Asian American emerging adults. Further studies on the protective role of preparation for bias in Asian American emerging adults need to be conducted.

Limitations and Future Directions

By using multiple recruitment methods, we were able to reduce reliance on a college sample and increase the range of variable scores. However, differences were found between the recruitment methods, making data analysis difficult. Furthermore, our sample size was relatively small ($N = 87$), potentially limiting our ability to detect significant results. Additionally, this small sample was diverse in terms of ethnicity, nationality, and generational status potentially influencing experiences with racial microaggressions, as some research suggests cultural nativity influences individuals' experience and interpretations of racial discrimination (Gee, Ryan, Laflamme, & Holt, 2006; Kuo, 1995).

The present study focused on Asian American emerging adults, an understudied population in investigations of racial socialization. While our study produced some significant findings, the particular developmental location of this group might help explain some unsupported findings. For example, the lack of significant relationship between experiences of racial microaggressions and collective self-esteem might be due to the nature of this developmental period. During emerging adulthood, there appear to be significant movements in one's identity development (Arnett, 2004), including ethnic identity (Phinney, 2006). As many of these young adults have not yet committed to their identity status (Marcia, 1966), experiences of racial discrimination may not have as strong of an influence on more internal forms of collective self-esteem.

Also important to consider is the possibility of measurement related errors. For example, the assessment of racial socialization relied on individuals' memories as a child of what cultural messages their parents communicated. Thus, the ability to recall might have influenced our results in an unexpected ways. Researchers investigating the role of racial socialization as a moderator should consider utilizing other study designs, such as a longitudinal study, to better understand its function. Furthermore, in future studies researchers should utilize both parent and child responses, which would provide a more thorough conceptualization of racial socialization.

The results of the present study demonstrate the potential importance of conversations about race in Asian American families, particularly when those conversations include the promotion of mistrust racial socialization strategy. Further research is needed to fully understand the role of racial socialization as well as the racial socialization messages that occur within Asian American families. Clinicians working with Asian Americans should consider the role racial socialization had on their clients' perception and experience of racial discrimination. Specifically, clinicians should not dismiss the mistrust Asian Americans have on other racial groups as this may allow them to externalize their racial discrimination experiences. It may be helpful for clinicians to explore and facilitate discussions about this mistrust of other racial groups.

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