

Familism in action in an emerging immigrant community: An examination of indirect effects in early adolescence

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Abstract:

Familism values promote the positive adaptation of Latinx youth, but few studies have examined potential indirect effects associated with these positive effects. In emerging immigrant communities, where fewer resources are available to youth and families to maintain cultural values and ties, familism may be especially important. In this study of 175 primarily second-generation Latinx youth in such a community, we tested whether familism values were indirectly associated with adolescent outcomes through positive parent–child relationships, private racial/ethnic regard, meaning in life, and support seeking coping. Familism values were associated with greater academic motivation. Additionally, there were significant indirect effects in terms of positive parent–child relationships explaining the links between familism and fewer parent-reported externalizing symptoms, and for meaning in life explaining the links between familism and fewer depressive symptoms and greater academic motivation. Familism was also associated with greater support seeking coping, but this was associated with greater depressive symptoms. Our study suggests that in an emerging immigrant community familism values are primarily associated with positive adaptation through distinct mechanisms.

Keywords: familism | immigrant | Latinx

Article:

Latinx populations constitute one of the fastest growing ethnic groups in the United States, especially in nontraditional receiving areas like the Southeast (Pew Research Center, 2018). In these settings, Latinx youth confront multiple risks, such as discrimination, acculturative stress, poverty, and lack of ethnic enclaves (Stein, Gonzales, García Coll, & Prandoni, 2016). In spite of these risks, Latinx youth consistently demonstrate positive social and academic adaptation, usually explained in the literature as the partial result of the promotive effects of familial cultural values (Hernández & Bámaca-Colbert, 2016). Familism values serve to guide parent–child and familial relations in Latinx families by dictating norms on how family members should behave and interact with one another (Sabogal, Marin, Otero-Sabogal, Marin, & Perez-Stable, 1987). Conceptually, these values include norms about (a) familial obligations (e.g., helping around the house; caretaking siblings), (b) familial support and interconnectedness (e.g., providing

emotional support), (c) family serving as behavioral referents (i.e., individual behavior reflecting on family), and (d) respecting family members (e.g., obedience; Stein et al., 2014).

However, few studies have explored the specific mechanisms through which familial cultural values promote adaptation and resilience in Latinx youths, especially in emerging immigrant communities. Building on past theoretical work explicating the mechanisms of familial cultural values (Hernández & Bámaca-Colbert, 2016), the current study tested potential indirect effects in the relation between familism values and depressive symptoms, externalizing symptoms, and academic motivation in Latinx early adolescents. These outcomes were selected because of the risk faced by Latinx youth where they confront both educational and mental health disparities in early adolescence relative to their non-Latinx white peers (e.g., McLaughlin, Hilt, & Nolen-Hoeksema, 2007; Musu-Gillette et al., 2017). We focused on mechanisms of familism values to adolescent outcomes that have been identified in the literature, like the parent–child relationship (Hernández & Bámaca-Colbert, 2016), but also examined mechanisms that have received relatively little research attention (i.e., meaning in life, coping, ethnic identity).

Emerging Immigrant Communities

The majority of the familism literature has focused on Latinx populations in traditional destinations (i.e., California and Arizona), and this paper contributes to the larger literature by examining familism values in understudied emerging communities. Traditionally, Latinx youth and their families settled in a few places in the U.S. (e.g., California, Texas, Florida). However, there has been an influx of Latinx families within the Southeastern regions of the United States in recent decades. Emerging immigrant communities tend to have fewer available resources and infrastructure particularly for non-English speaking individuals, and vary considerably in the context of reception and incorporation of Latinx youth and their families (from hostility to ambivalence and relative acceptance by existing community members; Marrow, 2011; Stein et al., 2016). In contrast, established immigrant communities tend to be located in the Southwestern United States and are characterized by longer Latinx historical and political legacies, more established infrastructure and resources, as well as spaces to celebrate Latinx culture and traditions (Marrow, 2011). In these communities, Latinx families have access to same-ethnic peers and families through ethnic enclaves that can support traditional familism values and promote positive adaptation (Gonzales et al., 2011; White, Zeiders, Knight, Roosa, & Tein, 2014). Indeed, neighborhood level familism values in such contexts are associated with fewer externalizing symptoms (Gonzales et al., 2011). Thus, understanding the indirect associations of familism values via other promotive processes contributes to the larger literature as these are relatively unexplored in emerging immigrant communities, where such promotive factors might be in particular need.

Familism Values in Latinx Populations

Theoretical models of adaptation in youth of color highlight the key role of culturally protective processes like familism values, and models specific to Latinx families focus on how parental familism values guide positive parenting processes, ultimately promoting adaptive youth outcomes (Grau, Azmitia, & Quattlebaum, 2009; Hernández & Bámaca-Colbert, 2016). A modification of the Integrative Model (Garcia Coll et al., 1996) for emerging immigrant

communities centers the promotive effects of familial values as directly influencing competencies in Latinx youth countering the combined contextual risk of social position variables (e.g., foreign and undocumented status) and inhibiting neighborhood environments that lack in structural support for Latinx families (Stein et al., 2016). Although familism values predict positive adaptation, including fewer depressive and externalizing symptoms and better academic adaptation (Hernández & Bámaca-Colbert, 2016; Stein et al., 2014), the specific mechanisms underlying these effects have not been fully explored. A cross-sectional design can provide important insights into the potential processes that undergird the promotive effects of familism values. Further, early adolescence serves as a critical time to understand the promotive effects of familism values on risk outcomes in Latinx youth as the internalization of these values guide behavior as the risk context becomes more heightened (e.g., potential increases in parent–child conflict, educational risk associated with the transition to middle school, increased risk for deviant peer affiliation, sharp increases in depressive symptomatology; Roeser, Eccles, & Sameroff, 2000).

Parent–Child Relationship

Not surprisingly, positive family functioning has long been theoretically hypothesized as a key factor linking familism to adaptation (Sabogal et al., 1987). Because of the central tenets of familial obligation and support, Latinx families have been characterized as cohesive and supportive, protecting each other in stressful times (Sabogal et al., 1987). In the same vein, these values prompt parents to support their children emotionally, monitor their whereabouts, and provide consistent discipline (Hernández & Bámaca-Colbert, 2016). The studies linking parental familism to parenting processes have focused on both parenting practices (i.e., monitoring, discipline) and parent–child relationship qualities (i.e., warmth, conflict; Hernández & Bámaca-Colbert, 2016), finding support for both. Yet, while parental familism values have predicted parenting practices and relationship qualities, which in turn, predict positive youth outcomes, few studies have tested specific indirect effects. In Morcillo et al.’s (2011) longitudinal study, this mediating effect for parent–child relationship quality (i.e., warmth) was only evident in middle childhood for externalizing symptoms, but not in adolescence. However, other studies do find this indirect effect in adolescence whereby familism values’ effects on smoking (Lorenzo-Blanco et al., 2016) and externalizing symptoms (Santisteban, Coatsworth, Briones, Kurtines, & Szapocznik, 2012) are in part explained by positive parenting (including composite measures of parenting practices and relationship quality). All three of these studies rely on parent report, but theoretical arguments posit that familism values may also play a role in how youth perceive and understand their parents’ behavior fostering positive reciprocal relationships (Stein et al., 2014). Thus, our study extends past work by focusing on adolescent reports of both familism values and parenting processes and focusing solely on the affective and supportive aspects of the relationship.

Ethnic–Racial Identity

Ethnic-racial identity also promotes adaptive outcomes in Latinx youth (Rivas-Drake et al., 2014), and consists of multiple facets including affective feelings toward one’s group (i.e., private regard), centrality, exploration, and resolution/commitment. Theoretically, cultural value endorsement and ethnic-racial identity processes inform each other through acculturation in

immigrant youth (Schwartz, Unger, Zamboanga, & Szapocznik, 2010). In adolescence, familism values consolidate and affirm ethnic-racial identity over time (exploration and belonging; Kiang & Fuligni, 2009). Given the interrelation between familism values and ethnic-racial identity processes and the link between ethnic-racial identity and adjustment, the promotive effects of familism values may be attributable to helping youth feel centered and positive about their ethnic-racial group as suggested by social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). This process may be especially salient in an emerging immigrant community. To our knowledge, only one study has examined an indirect effect between familism, ethnic-racial identity, and adaptation. In a college cross-sectional Latinx sample, familism values were associated with greater ethnic identity resolution, which predicted greater pro-social behavior (Streit, Carlo, Killoren, & Alfaro, 2018). We examine private regard as a potential indirect mechanism of familism values on adaptive outcomes as the affective component of ethnic-racial identity has been associated with academic outcomes and negative adjustment (Rivas-Drake et al., 2014).

Sense of Meaning and Purpose

Familism values may be central in helping youth feel a sense of meaning and purpose in their life, as the values provide scripts for how to contribute meaningfully to one's family (Kiang, 2012). A sense of purpose is defined as "a central, self-organizing life aim that organizes and stimulates goals, manages behaviors, and provides a sense of meaning" (McKnight & Kashdan, 2009, p. 242), and can be an important psychological resource for youth who face marginalization (Sumner, Burrow, & Hill, 2018). Theoretically, this sense of purpose and meaning can be derived from role fulfillment associated with cultural values fostering positive psychological adaptation, including less emotional distress and externalizing symptoms (Sumner et al., 2018). Although not explicitly tested with Latinx populations, in Asian American adolescents, daily familial assistance predicted daily feelings of purpose (Kiang, 2012). In a sample of diverse adolescents, including Latinx, greater sense of meaning was related to both greater happiness and less distress (Kiang & Fuligni, 2010). These initial studies point to the potential role of meaning and purpose to mediate the associations between familism values and outcomes.

Support Seeking Coping

Familism values also dictate potential coping responses in times of stress with a particular focus on seeking emotional and instrumental support from one's family to weather difficult situations (Sabogal et al., 1987). Theoretically, as parents socialize their youth to familism values, there are likely explicit messages about how youth can turn to their family for support but also serve as sources of support for their families (Stein et al., 2014). In a small study of Latinx middle schoolers, familism values predicted greater engagement coping on days of increased stress, providing support that familism values dictate potential coping responses (Santiago, Torres, Brewer, Fuller, & Lennon, 2016). However, no studies to our knowledge have tested how familism values predict support seeking coping more specifically, and its relation to adaptation in Latinx youth.

The Current Study

We test these questions of the indirect effects of familism in a cross-sectional design to further our understanding of the processes involved in the promotive effects of familism values. As noted above, few studies have explored processes associated with the promotive effects of familism values testing multiple outcomes and multiple processes. We hypothesized that a positive parent–child relationship, private ethnic-racial regard, sense of purpose and meaning, and support seeking coping would serve as indirect mediators of the relation between familism values, and depressive and externalizing symptoms and academic motivation. Because there are so few studies examining these processes, we did not make specific hypotheses about unique indirect effects, but documenting these effects can explicate further the unique associations between familism and key outcomes.

Method

Participants

The present study included 176 Latinx mothers and their adolescents, recruited from two middle schools in a central region of North Carolina in 2014–2016 (Familias Study UNCG IRB approval #13–0087). One adolescent (and the mother report of that adolescent) was randomly selected and excluded ($n = 175$) because of the fact that one family had twins enrolled in the study. Adolescents were in Grades 7 (82.4%) and 8, 51.5% identified as female, and were on average 12.87 years of age (range = 11–14 years). The majority of parents (mothers $n = 150$, 88.2%; fathers $n = 146$, 85.9%) were born in Mexico, with others from Central and South American countries (mothers $n = 16$; fathers $n = 17$), and three mothers and four fathers were born in the United States. Parents lived in the United States for an average of 15 years (mothers = 15.71 years, $SD = 4.65$; fathers = 16.90 years, $SD = 6.62$). The majority of adolescents were born in the United States ($n = 148$, 87.1%), and of those youth who were not born in the United States ($n = 22$, 12.9%) the average age of immigration was 4.42 years (range = 0 to 12 years). The mean family income was \$23,143.69, with a range from \$5,000.00 to \$87,499.50 ($SD = \$12,529.53$). All youth were bilingual and fluent in English, with the exception of three who primarily spoke Spanish and completed the assessment in Spanish. In the city where the data were drawn, 59.9% identified as non-Latinx White, 25.8% Latinx, 11.2% Black, and less than 1% Asian.

Procedure

Procedures included recruitment by phone or door-to-door using school lists of enrolled 7th and 8th Grade Latinx students in a semiurban school district. Enrollment criteria included: (a) both biological parents were Latinx, (b) the mother (or biological female relative) was the resident caregiver of the participating adolescent, and (c) youth ranged between 11 and 14 years of age. The criteria about residence was to ensure both participants in the study (i.e., adolescents and mothers/caretakers) lived in the same home. A total of 597 families were targeted for recruitment: 16 families had moved (3%), 217 were not located (e.g., disconnected numbers, families not home; 36%), and 364 families were contacted (47 were not eligible [13%], 125 declined [34%], 16 consented but did not complete interviews [4%], and 176 families consented and completed interviews [48%]). Trained bilingual research assistants collected data in the home, and materials were available in Spanish and English. Parents were paid \$20 following completion of the approximately 2-hr interview (interviewers read the survey questions aloud).

Youth completed questions using a computer-assisted interview format that took approximately 1.5–2 hr to complete and received a \$10 gift card following completion of the survey.

Measures

Familism values

Four subscales of the Mexican American Cultural Values Scale (MACVS; Knight et al., 2010) assessed adolescent familism values (support; obligation, referent, and respect). Adolescents rated the strength of their endorsement of core values on a scale of 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*completely*). Items include “No matter what, children should always treat their parents with respect” and “It is always important to be united as a family.” Each subscale has either five or six items with higher scores indicating greater familism values. The MACVS has been used extensively to assess familism values, and has demonstrated adequate psychometric properties (Knight et al., 2010). The scales demonstrated adequate internal consistency ($\alpha = .73-.82$). Each subscale was averaged, respectively, to compute four manifest variables that were indicators of the latent familism construct specified in Mplus.

Positive parent–child relationship

Adolescents reported on the quality of their relationships with their parents separately on three subscales of the Network of Relationships Inventory (Furman & Buhrmester, 2009). Two subscales (Affection, Approval) with three items each tap into the frequency of loving behavior on a 5-point scale from 1 (*never*) to 5 (*always*; e.g., “How much does this person like or love you?”). One subscale (Satisfaction) assesses overall level of contentment with the relation on a 5-point scale from 1 (*little or none*) to 5 (*the most*; e.g., “How happy are you with your relationship with this person?”). The scales have shown adequate psychometric properties, and in the current study demonstrate good internal reliability ($\alpha = .88-.93$). Each subscale was averaged for each parent separately, then combined to reflect the construct for both parents jointly (only the mother subscale was used if father data were not reported, $n = 24$). These subscales then constituted the manifest indicator variables for the latent construct of positive parent–child relationship specified in Mplus.

Private regard

Adolescents’ self-report of private regard was assessed by four items from a modified Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity (MIBI; Sellers, Smith, Shelton, Rowley, & Chavous, 1998). Private regard measured adolescents’ feelings about being a part of their ethnic-racial group (e.g., “I feel good about being a member of my ethnic group”). Items ranged on a 5-point scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). Internal consistency of these items was good ($\alpha = .88$). One latent private regard variable was specified with the four items used as indicators.

Purpose and meaning in life

The five items from the Presence of Meaning subscale from the Meaning in Life Questionnaire was used to assess adolescents' reports of finding meaning and purpose in their lives (Steger, Frazier, Oishi, & Kaler, 2006). Adolescents reported the frequency of their sense of meaning on a 5-point scale from 1 (*almost never*) to 5 (*almost always*; e.g., "My life has a clear sense of purpose" and "I have a good sense of what makes my life meaningful"). The scale has demonstrated good psychometric properties (Steger et al., 2006), had good internal reliability ($\alpha = .88$), and has been used in middle school samples, including with Latinx youth (Yeager & Bundick, 2009). Individual items were specified to load on a single latent variable.

Support seeking coping

Three scales from the COPE scale (Carver, Scheier, & Weintraub, 1989) were used to assess instrumental and emotional support seeking. The measure asks youth to report their coping in stressful situations on a 4-point scale, 1 (*I usually do not do this*) to 4 (*I usually do this a lot*). These scales were selected based on results from an exploratory factor analyses with all the COPE scales in the current sample, and in these analyses, a factor emerged with Instrumental Social Support, Emotional Support, and Venting subscales (e.g., "I try to get advice from someone about what to do," "I let my feelings out," and "I discuss my feelings with someone"). The subscales have demonstrated adequate psychometric properties (Carver et al., 1989), and had good internal reliability in the current study ($\alpha = .74-.81$). The subscales were treated as manifest indicators for a single latent coping variable.

Depressive symptoms

Adolescents reported their level of current depressive symptoms on the 33-item Mood and Feeling Questionnaire (Angold et al., 1995) on a 3-point scale, (0) *not true*, (1) *sometimes true*, or (2) *mostly true*. This measure has demonstrated adequate psychometric properties (Burlerson Daviss, et al., 2006) and was reliable in this sample ($\alpha = .94$). Items were summed with higher values indicating more depressive symptoms and specified as a manifest variable in Mplus.

Externalizing symptoms

Mothers reported on adolescents' externalizing symptoms using the broadband externalizing scale on the Child Behavior Checklist (CBCL; Achenbach & Rescorla, 2001). The externalizing broadband scale assessed rule-breaking and aggressive behavior indicated by 33 items. Internal consistency was high ($\alpha = .90$). Items were summed and scored such that higher values indicated higher levels of externalizing symptoms and specified as a manifest variable in Mplus.

Academic motivation

Adolescents' interest and valuing of school was assessed by three manifest variables of utility value of school (three-item scale; $\alpha = .71$), intrinsic academic motivation (two-item scale; $r = .62, p < .001$), and value of academic success (three-item scale; $\alpha = .81$; Eccles, 1983). Previous work with Latinx adolescents has shown adequate reliability across the academic motivation indices ($\alpha s = .74-.84$; Fuligni, 1997; Fuligni, Witkow, & Garcia, 2005). Each subscale was

averaged, respectively, to compute three manifest variables that were then specified as indicators for the latent construct of academic motivation.

Data Analytic Plan

We used structural equation modeling (SEM) in Mplus 8.1 (Muthén & Muthén, 1998–2017) to test indirect effects to understand the mechanisms by which familism values are associated with Latinx youth self-reported academic motivation, depressive symptoms, and parent-reported externalizing symptoms. Latent variables were constructed for the initial variable of familism values and mediating (parent–child relationship, coping, presence of meaning, and private regard) factors, and one outcome factor as described above. Manifest variables were used for two outcomes (depressive and externalizing symptoms). Good model fit was evaluated using a nonsignificant χ^2 statistic, comparative fit indices (CFI > .90), the root-mean-squared error of approximation (RMSEA < .05), and the standardized root-mean-squared residual (SRMR < .08; Browne & Cudeck, 1992; Hu & Bentler, 1999). We did not include any covariates in the model.

To evaluate the statistical significance of indirect effects, bias-corrected bootstrapping confidence intervals (CIs) were estimated using the recommended 5,000 iterations, as this approach has been shown to provide greater power and more precise CIs than percentile bootstrapped CIs (Preacher, Rucker, & Hayes, 2007). The indirect effect is significant when the 95% CI does not include zero. Missing data were addressed using full-information maximum-likelihood estimation methods (FIML), which allows for estimation of the models using all available data.

Results

Correlations, means, and standard deviations are presented in Table 1. The model provided acceptable fit to the data, $\chi^2(209, N = 175) = 377.395, p = .000$; RMSEA = 0.068, CI [.057, .079]; CFI = .922; SRMR = .079. Regarding direct effects, results showed that familism values were significantly associated with academic motivation ($b = .36, p < .001$), but were not significantly associated with the other two outcome variables (externalizing symptoms and depressive symptoms). Regarding indirect effects, results showed four significant pathways. Specifically, familism values were associated with higher presence of meaning in life (i.e., the first path in the mediated pathway; $b = .52, p < .001$), which in turn was associated with higher academic motivation ($b = .13, p < .05$) and lower depressive symptoms ($b = -3.25, p < .05$; the mediator to outcome associations). The specific indirect effects from familism values → presence of meaning in life → academic motivation ($b = .07, 95\% \text{ CI } [0.01, 0.17]$), and from familism values → presence of meaning in life → depressive symptoms ($b = -1.70, 95\% \text{ CI } [-3.78, -0.53]$) were both significant. Additionally, familism values were associated with higher parent–child relationship quality ($b = .47, p < .001$), which in turn was associated with lower externalizing symptoms ($b = -2.35, p < .05$). The specific indirect effect from familism values → parent–child relationship → externalizing symptoms was significant ($b = -1.11, 95\% \text{ CI } [-2.43, -0.30]$). Further, familism values were associated with higher support seeking coping ($b = .15, p < .05$), which in turn was associated with higher depressive symptoms ($b = 6.85, p < .001$). The specific indirect effect from familism values → coping → depressive symptoms was also

significant ($b = 1.04$, 95% CI [.16, 2.42]). The total effect of familism values on depressive symptoms was negative suggesting that greater familism was associated with fewer depressive symptoms ($b = -4.37$, 95% CI [-7.88, -1.56]) when including all indirect and direct effects. See Figure 1 for graphical depiction of results.

Table 1. Youth Predictor, Mediating, and Outcome Variables: Correlations and Descriptive Statistics ($N = 175$)

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Familism value	—							
2. Positive parent-child relationship	.42**	—						
3. Private regard	.30**	.31**	—					
4. Meaning in life	.23**	.26**	.15	—				
5. Support seeking coping	.13	.07	.19*	.19*	—			
6. Depressive symptoms	-.20*	-.19*	-.09	-.28**	.23**	—		
7. Externalizing symptoms	-.03	-.17	-.04	-.15	-.07	.16*	—	
8. Academic motivation	.37**	.24**	.23**	.19*	.12	-.06	-.23	—
<i>M</i>	4.14	4.3	4.33	3.71	2.30	11.03	7.11	4.14
<i>SD</i>	0.58	0.81	0.72	0.82	0.67	11.03	6.86	0.56
Range	1–5	1–5	1–5	1–5	1–4	0–66	0–66	1–5

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .001$.

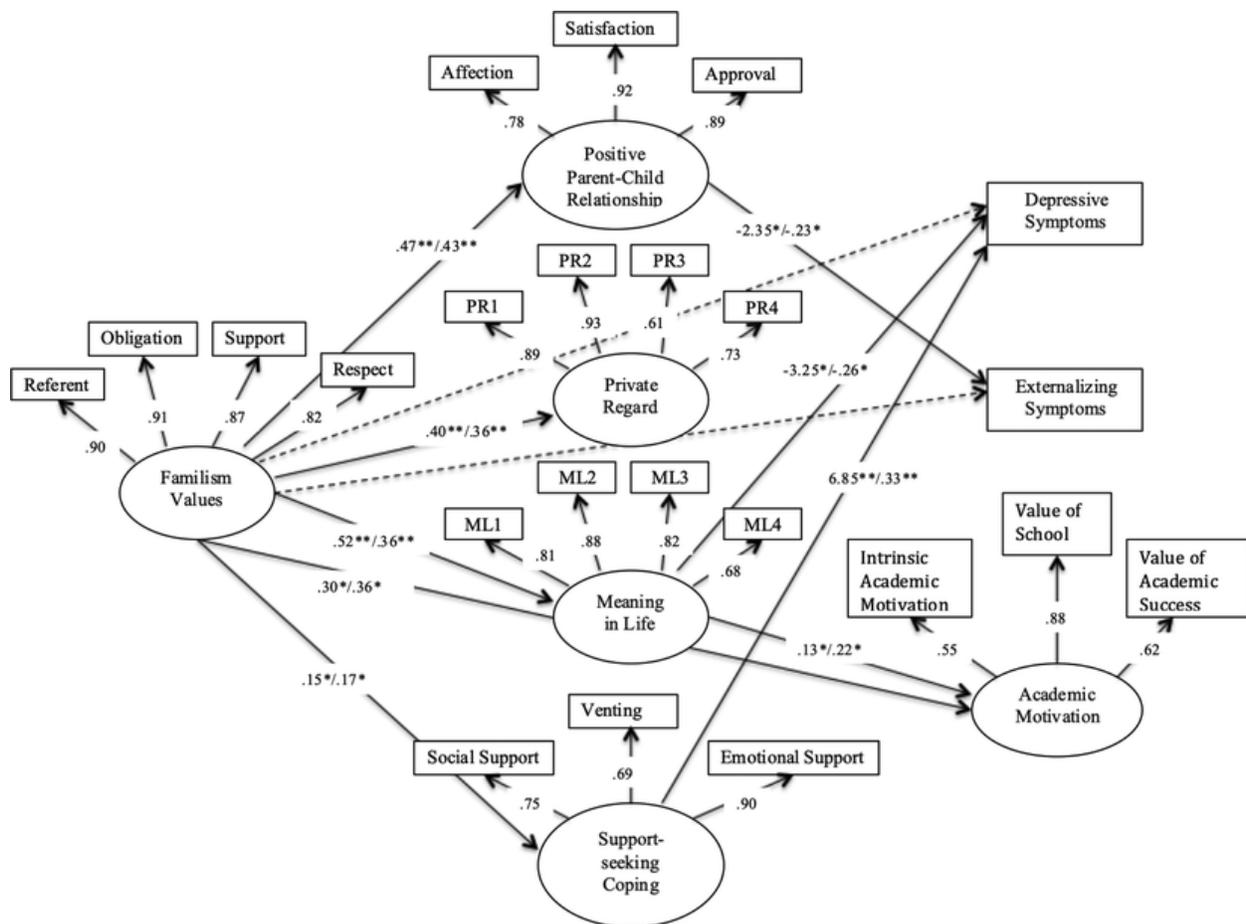


Figure 1. Indirect effect model examining mechanisms by which youth familism values are associated with youth-reported depressive symptoms, youth-reported academic motivation, and mother-reported externalizing symptoms.

Significant indirect effects are described in text. Bolded paths indicate significant effects at $p < .05$ (*) and $p < .001$ (**). Correlated errors among endogenous variables were included in the model but not displayed to simplify presentation. Unstandardized/standardized coefficients are presented.

Because of the cross-sectional approach in modeling indirect effects, we also tested a competing model with familism as the mediator and parent–child relationship quality, private regard, purpose and meaning in life, and support seeking coping as predictors. Because these are not nested models, comparing the AIC and BIC provides an indication of comparative model fit, and the familism mediator model showed higher AIC and BIC statistics (familism mediator model: AIC = 13,481.77; BIC = 13,880.54) relative to the original model (original model: AIC = 9171.15; BIC = 9455.98), indicating worse model fit. In this model, all of the main effects remained the same, and there was only one indirect effect with parent–child relationship to familism to academic motivation ($b = 0.76$, 95% CI [0.019, 0.176]). This extends the main effect for familism to academic motivation in our original analyses suggesting that parent–child relationship quality may also be important to consider. Familism was not a mediator for any of the other processes to any of the outcomes.

Discussion

Familism values provide Latinx families with cultural scripts dictating familial obligations, support, and respect that guide both parental and youth behaviors (Stein et al., 2014). Familism values were directly and indirectly associated with greater academic motivation through a sense of meaning in life. Familism's promotive effects for depressive and externalizing symptoms were exerted through a positive parent–child relationship and a sense of meaning and purpose. However, although familism was associated with greater support seeking coping, this coping style was associated with greater depressive symptoms. Thus, our study extends past research documenting the largely promotive effects of familism values on multiple youth outcomes by identifying critical processes that may undergird their positive links with adjustment in emerging immigrant communities that may lack the ethnic enclaves and support of familism values at the community level. Our findings align with Garcia Coll and colleagues' (1996) Integrative Model by demonstrating that familism values are associated with developmental competencies in early adolescence in emerging immigrant communities where the contextual risk for discrimination and foreigner based objectification is prevalent (Stein et al., 2014).

As suggested by past work (Lorenzo-Blanco et al., 2016; Santisteban et al., 2012), positive parent–child relationship qualities were central in protecting youth against externalizing symptoms. This is the first study that extends this work to youth self-report of familism and parent–child relationship quality, and suggests that familism values foster positive parent–child relations including satisfaction with the relationship and perceptions of love and support from parents. These positive relationship characteristics may promote greater adolescent self-disclosure facilitating parental monitoring (Lippold, Greenberg, Graham, & Feinberg, 2014). However, this indirect effect was not found for either academic motivation or depressive symptoms. This was also true in the only other study that tested this question where the indirect effects were not found for depressive symptoms (Lorenzo-Blanco et al., 2016), suggesting that there may be unique processes depending on outcomes that should be further explored. Positive parent–child relationship characteristics may be specific to linking externalizing symptoms with parental and adolescent familism values as a result of behavioral expectations of monitoring and

behavioral control that are viewed as signs of affection and protection (Crockett & Russell, 2013), and where adolescents then provide more information to their parents about their whereabouts supporting monitoring and supervision. However, our competing model found that parent–child relationship quality indirectly influenced academic motivation through its association with familism values. Thus, parent–child relationship and familism may influence academic motivation and outcomes in distinct, bidirectional ways that should be further explored.

Another unique effect was the indirect effect of familism values through meaning and purpose in life in terms of associations with fewer depressive symptoms and higher academic motivation. This is the first study to our knowledge to document this protective effect in Latinx youth. Given that a sense of meaning and purpose is associated with fewer depressive symptoms in other samples (Kiang & Witkow, 2015), our finding suggests that indeed for Latinx youth this meaning can be centered in the fulfillment of familism values and a sense of connection with one’s family. Our findings align with broader calls in the field in examining meaning and purpose as critical for marginalized youth who face multiple attacks on their identity and self-worth in the larger U.S. political and policy landscape (Sumner et al., 2018). This meaning could also fuel academic motivation as one way to find purpose in honoring their parental sacrifice of immigrating to the United States (Fuligni, 2001; Hill & Torres, 2010). Future work should continue to examine these processes across other stages of development and continue to test what other factors contribute to a sense of meaning and purpose in Latinx youth, as these protective processes may shield youth against the harmful effects of marginalization in emerging immigrant communities.

Additionally, support seeking coping had a significant indirect effect between familism values and depressive symptoms. Familism values were indeed associated with greater support seeking coping, and unexpectedly, support seeking coping was associated with greater depressive symptoms, but this may be due to fact that youth who are more distressed tend to seek out more support and express their emotions more to their families (Compas, Connor-Smith, Saltzman, Thomsen, & Wadsworth, 2001). Other studies have documented that social support seeking is associated with greater internalizing symptoms for Mexican-origin girls (Brittian, Toomey, Gonzales, & Dumka, 2013). These relations may also become more salient when taking into account stressors. For example, in the current sociopolitical climate where Latinx families are reporting greater distress (Roche, Vaquera, White, & Rivera, 2018), these support seeking processes within the family may become more prevalent and necessary to combat the toxic effects of increased stress. Taken together, this suggests that more work should explore whether familism values lead to greater support seeking and whether over time this support seeking serves to predict fewer internalizing symptoms.

In terms of the other indirect effects, whereas familism was associated with greater private regard, private regard was not directly or indirectly associated with any outcomes. This suggests that private regard and familism values may act in concert in predicting positive adaptive outcomes. Our alternate model also found that familism did not serve as mediator for private regard. When taking into account the other variables in the model (e.g., purpose and meaning in life, parent–child relationship), it may be the promotive effects of private regard are no longer significant for these outcomes. For example, another study found that meaning in life accounted

for 28% to 52% of the protective effect of ethnic identity on developmental outcomes (Kiang & Fuligni, 2010). Private regard may also be important as a mechanism to other outcomes like self-esteem (Rivas-Drake et al., 2014). Indeed, MIBI-based measures are less robustly associated with academic outcomes (Rivas-Drake et al., 2014). Or, it may be that other aspects of ethnic-racial identity are more critical to familism values like ethnic-racial exploration and resolution (Constante, Marchand, Cross, & Rivas-Drake, 2018; Streit et al., 2018) and familism may serve as a mediator of these aspects of ethnic-racial identity. Indeed, in a cross-sectional analysis, Constante et al. (2018) found support for an indirect effect of ethnic identity exploration through familism on academic cognitive, emotional, and behavioral engagement. Taken together, it is clear that ethnic-racial identity and cultural endorsement influence adaptation in Latinx families, and more work should continue to disentangle possible differential effects of various components of ethnic-racial identity and related processes over time and with distinct outcomes. Likely, there are bidirectional effects of values and identity across adolescents and more work should specifically target this question.

Finally, in terms of the emerging immigrant community, there is some initial evidence to suggest that familism processes may differ across geographic locales. In a study comparing rural and urban North Carolina Latinx youth to those in Los Angeles, Latinx youth in North Carolina with more coethnic peers reported greater familial obligations relative to other youth when accounting for ethnic-racial identity (Yahirun, Perreira, & Fuligni, 2015). Our study was conducted in such a city where Latinx youth constituted a larger portion of their school relative to other emerging immigrant communities (Stein et al., 2019), but did not represent their schools in nearly as large numbers as in established immigrant areas such as Los Angeles. Thus, understanding the mechanisms of familism in different contexts will be important, as support for these values at the community level may differ across settings.

Because of the cross-sectional nature of our study, additional work should examine these indirect effects longitudinally to more systematically test mediational processes. We acknowledge that indirect effects in cross-sectional samples may be overestimated (Maxwell, Cole, & Mitchell, 2011), and unfortunately, to our knowledge, there is no multiwave data set in an emerging immigrant community that has all of the mechanisms described in this study. Despite this limitation, we feel that given the dearth of work on potential processes undergirding the promotive effects of familism values in emerging immigrant communities, our study makes a unique contribution to the literature. Additionally, one mechanism that had support for indirect effects has been established in other samples longitudinally (parent-child relationship quality: Lorenzo-Blanco et al., 2016; Morcillo et al., 2011), lending support for a mediational effect. For meaning and purpose in life, there is some evidence in daily diary samples with Asian American youth also supporting its potential longitudinal role (Kiang, 2012).

Attention should be paid to distinct developmental stages in future work, as the evidence is currently conflicting. For example, Morcillo et al. (2011) only found parenting processes as mediating in middle childhood and Streit et al. (2018) did not find parent-child processes to mediate familism in a cross-sectional college sample. Future studies should also consider acculturation and generational status as potential moderators of these mechanisms, as these may vary. In sum, our study suggests that familism values support adaptation in Latinx early adolescents in emerging immigrant communities in part by facilitating positive parent-child

relationships and supporting a sense of meaning and purpose. Practitioners should endeavor to strengthen these values in Latinx families to facilitate the positive adaptation and development competences of Latinx youth. For example, clinicians may want to explicitly assess for familism values in parents and youth, and use these values as way to develop goals, guide behavioral contingencies, and inform cognitive restructuring. School personnel could also expand goals and values work by explicitly incorporating familism in these types of activities. Given the level of stress faced by this population currently (Roche et al., 2018), particularly in emerging immigrant communities, it is essential that these values be reaffirmed and supported, and to further understand the specific mechanisms by which these values exert their positive effects.

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