

Examining predictors of Mexican American adolescents' coping typologies: Maternal and paternal behaviors and adolescent gender

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Abstract:

This study used latent profile analysis to develop coping typologies of 340, 14- to 16-year-old Mexican American adolescents ($M = 14.46$, $SD = 0.69$). Three typologies were identified: (a) *opposition coping* (adolescents who tended to use anger and venting emotions), (b) *support-seeking coping* (adolescents who relied on seeking support), and (c) *escape and opposition coping* (adolescents who relied on anger, venting, substance-use coping, behavioral avoidance, and peer support). Three key parental behaviors (support, knowledge, psychological control) of mothers and fathers and adolescent gender were examined as predictors of the coping typologies. Results indicated that parental support and knowledge, particularly from mothers, predicted membership into the support-seeking coping typology relative to the other two typologies. Girls were more likely than boys to utilize support-seeking coping than opposition coping. Gender socialization norms that may have influenced these results are discussed.

Keywords: adolescent | coping | parenting behaviors | gender | Mexican American

Article:

Nearly one quarter of U.S. children under the age of 18 are Latino of which almost three fourths are of Mexican origin (U.S. Census Bureau, 2012). This growing population of young people is often characterized as facing stressors above and beyond those experienced by their European American counterparts (García Coll et al., 1996). In addition to culturally universal stressors (e.g., parent-child conflict, economic stress), Mexican American youth also may experience culturally-relevant stressors (e.g., acculturative stress, discrimination; Stein, Gonzalez, & Huq, 2012). Research has shown that discrimination, acculturative stress, and economic hardship were associated with higher internalizing distress and externalizing behaviors, lower academic performance, and greater somatic complaints (Huynh & Fuligni, 2010; Umaña-Taylor, Updegraff, & Gonzales-Backen, 2011). Although there is a burgeoning literature base on the detrimental effects of uncontrollable stressors for adolescent adjustment, much less is known

regarding Mexican American adolescents' coping strategies and the primary influences on their coping repertoires (Kuo, 2011).

Parental behaviors are likely relevant for adolescents' coping responses as parents are viewed as primary socializing agents and consistently influence a variety of outcomes among Mexican American adolescents (Bush, Supple, & Lash, 2004). Recent studies of Mexican American and European American youth found that parental support and knowledge were associated with more adaptive adolescent behaviors such as coping characterized by seeking support, problem solving, and planning and decreased engagement in risky behaviors (Mogro-Wilson, 2008; Swanson, Valiente, Lemery-Chalfant, & O'Brien, 2010) whereas psychological control was associated with more maladaptive adolescent behavioral outcomes such as anger, venting, or substance-use coping (Caples & Barrera, 2006). However, studies of Mexican American adolescents have yet to consider how maternal and paternal behaviors and adolescent gender influence adolescents' coping typologies. This absence of research on Mexican American families is noteworthy as these factors may have increased relevance given Mexican American cultural values (familismo, traditional gender role values) that emphasize the importance of family and the organizing nature of gender within family processes (Knight et al., 2010; McHale, Updegraff, Shanahan, Crouter, & Killoren, 2005).

In addition to examining predictors of Mexican American adolescents' coping responses, research is needed that identifies how Mexican American adolescents cope with stress. To accomplish both goals in the present study, we conducted Latent Profile Analysis (LPA). LPA is a *person-centered* approach that uses statistical models to identify typologies of individuals who share similar characteristics and allows for subsequent models to examine predictors of identified typologies. For example, we utilized LPA to identify subgroups of Mexican American adolescents who share similar coping responses and examined how maternal and paternal behaviors and adolescent gender are associated with being classified into the different coping typologies. This approach is advantageous because coping typologies are identified within a Mexican American sample rather than extant studies of European American adolescents.

Theoretical Framework

The present study was guided by Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory and Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) theory of stress and coping. Ecological systems theory posited that proximal processes, defined as consistent and ongoing interactions between parents and their children, are the primary mechanism in shaping development over time. Guided by this proposition and previous research, we examined three key parental behaviors (i.e., parental support, knowledge, and psychological control) as these represent important proximal processes that have been associated with adolescent behavioral outcomes (Swanson et al., 2010). Another key proposition of ecological theory is that person characteristics, such as gender of parent and adolescent, play a significant role in individuals' development through their ability to affect the strength and direction of proximal processes (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Moreover, the effect of proximal processes on individual development is influenced by the overarching macrosystem (e.g., cultural norms and expectations). For example, mothers and fathers may differentially influence boys' and girls' coping typologies depending on families' adherence to gender socialization norms within their cultural group. As such, we examined parent and adolescent

gender as a main effect and adolescent gender as a moderator in the association between parental behaviors and adolescent coping typologies.

Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) theory of stress and coping viewed individual responses to stress as transactions that occur between the person and the environment. The environment, or the external resources and demands, was proposed to influence coping responses through individuals' cognitive appraisals of the stressful event. Adolescents' cognitive appraisals of stressors may represent the mechanism by which parental behaviors influence youths' coping responses. Two types of cognitive appraisals include the person's assessment of how the stressful encounter will influence their own well-being (*primary appraisal*) and the availability of coping options (*secondary appraisal*). Cognitive appraisals and the resulting coping responses also are shaped by social resources available to the individual when coping with the stressor. Social resources can include supportive and knowledgeable parent(s) who are available to their adolescent's needs during times of stress (Skinner & Wellborn, 1994). Adolescents' coping also can be shaped by a lack of social resources if parents' behaviors are perceived as manipulative and psychologically controlling. Guided by previous theory (i.e., ecological theory and stress and coping theory), in the current study, consistent and ongoing interactions between parents and adolescents are proposed to represent proximal processes that inform adolescents' perception of threat or challenge and the availability of coping resources.

Conceptualization of Coping Strategies in Adolescence

Broadly, coping has been conceptualized as "regulation under stress" (Skinner & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2007). Based on a review on the development of coping during childhood and adolescence (Skinner & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2007), several types of coping were identified such as support-seeking coping, opposition coping, and escape coping. Support-seeking coping involves a reliance on others (e.g., seeking support from family, peers, and religion) for emotional and instrumental support triggered by challenge appraisals. Opposition coping involves coping strategies that may push supportive others away (e.g., anger coping, projection, venting feelings, and blaming others) while escape coping strategies allow individuals to disengage or distance themselves from stressors (e.g., substance-use coping and behavioral avoidance) triggered by threat appraisals.

Although the adaptive quality of coping varies by context and stressors experienced, support-seeking coping generally represents a more constructive response by using available support resources whereas escape and opposition tend to be viewed as maladaptive responses, particularly when used as a primary coping strategy over time (Skinner, Edge, Altman, & Sherwood, 2003). Previous research of Latino, African American, Asian, and German adolescents has found, for example, that adolescent coping typologies characterized by escape and opposition coping strategies were associated with greater depressive symptoms whereas coping typologies characterized by planning and support seeking were associated with fewer depressive symptoms over time (Aldridge & Roesch, 2008; Seiffge-Krenke & Klessinger, 2000).

Mexican American Parental Behaviors and Adolescent Coping

Previous research utilizing primarily European and European American samples suggested that parents who are supportive serve as coping resources for their children through adolescents increased likelihood of seeking support when faced with problems (Seiffge-Krenke, 2011; Skinner & Wellborn, 1994). Consequently, adolescents may be more likely to appraise stressors as challenges and use coping strategies that are triggered by challenge appraisals (e.g., support-seeking coping). Consistent with this view, a study of primarily Mexican American and European American adolescents found that parental support was associated with adolescents' increased use of problem solving and planning (i.e., engagement coping; Swanson et al., 2010).

Similarly, parents with greater knowledge about their adolescent's day-to-day activities may be more available and approachable, and as a result have greater opportunities to provide their adolescent with constructive coping messages (e.g., seeking support from their family, a reliance on their religion, or close peers) while also discouraging the use of maladaptive coping strategies (e.g., anger coping, substance-use coping). Although such an association has not been empirically supported, parental knowledge also may reflect closeness in the parent-adolescent relationship (Stattin & Kerr, 2000) and lead to greater self-disclosure of stressors or seeking support from parents. Specific to Mexican-origin families, cultural values of familism and religiosity also may create the expectation that parents have a high degree of knowledge of children's lives and (in cases where parents and adolescents are close) increase the expectation that children should seek support from family and religion when facing a problem (Knight et al., 2010). Although research is limited, studies have found that parental knowledge and monitoring, respectively, were associated with higher self-esteem (Bámaca, Umaña-Taylor, Shin, & Alfaro, 2005) and lower levels of substance use among Latino adolescents (Mogro-Wilson, 2008).

In contrast to parental support and knowledge, psychologically controlling parenting may undermine perceptions of others as coping resources and promote maladaptive coping strategies. Aspects of psychological control include guilt induction, shame, and love withdrawal; control techniques that are believed to be manipulative, exploitative, and harmful to the parent-adolescent relationship (Bean & Northup, 2009). Such behaviors also may encourage adolescents to engage in coping responses triggered by threat appraisals as a way to change their environment (e.g., opposition and escape coping; Seiffge-Krenke, 2011). While few studies are available, research using samples of Mexican American and European American adolescents have found that maternal hostile and demeaning practices (verbal hostility, belittling, and humiliating parenting) were associated with higher levels of adolescents' avoidant coping behaviors or escape coping (Caples & Barrera, 2006) and that coercive and manipulative control by parents was not related to adolescents' constructive coping (Swanson et al., 2010). In sum, the few available studies suggest that adolescents who experience high levels of psychological control from parents are less likely to cope in ways that are associated with improved outcomes.

The Role of Gender in the Linkages Between Parental Behaviors and Adolescent Coping

Parent Gender. Beyond the need for greater research on the roles of fathers and mothers for adolescent outcomes (Cabrera & Bradley, 2012), the potential importance of differentiated gender roles in Mexican American culture also led us to examine the effects of paternal and maternal behaviors for adolescent coping typologies. Previous research has found gender differences in parental support and knowledge in that Mexican American mothers displayed

greater engagement in children's day-to-day activities (Hossain & Shipman, 2009), and reported higher levels of acceptance toward their child and knowledge about their adolescent's daily experiences than did fathers (Updegraff, Delgado, & Wheeler, 2009). Beyond main effect differences, Updegraff et al. (2009) found that maternal knowledge, but not paternal knowledge, was associated with boys' and girls' school grades. In another study, Mexican American adolescents expected their mothers, but not fathers, to be available at home, provide affectionate displays of warmth, and encourage them to discuss their feelings (Crockett, Brown, Russell, & Shen, 2007). Finally, a study found that maternal and paternal psychological control were negatively associated with Latino adolescents' self-esteem but that associations varied by adolescent gender for maternal psychological control (Bean & Northrup, 2009).

Adolescent Gender. Gender socialization norms also may influence boys' and girls' coping strategies (Seiffge-Krenke, 2011). Within Mexican American families, girls tend to be socialized to value and preserve relationships, engage in more caregiving responsibilities and household tasks, and experience greater parental control than boys in Mexican immigrant families with stronger ties to Mexican culture (McHale et al., 2005; Raffaelli & Ontai, 2004). As a result, girls may be more likely than boys to be at home with their family and have greater exposure to messages related to a reliance on family, religion, or close peer relationships or modeling of support-seeking coping from family members. With regard to coping research, studies of Latino adolescents reported that girls were more likely than boys to engage in support-seeking coping; however, girls also were more likely than boys to use opposition coping strategies (e.g., vent emotions, anger; Epstein-Ngo, Maurizi, Bregman, & Ceballo, 2013; Kobus & Reyes, 2000). The latter finding is somewhat surprising given the potential for opposition coping to hamper relationships, but it could also be that opposition coping is viewed differently by others depending on adolescents' gender. Fewer studies have specifically examined gender differences in escape coping strategies for Mexican American adolescents; however, one study on Latino adolescents found that boys were more likely to use substances than are girls (Lac et al., 2011), which can be one form of escape coping (e.g., substance-use coping).

Moderating Effect of Adolescent Gender. Given the suggested importance of gender in shaping parent-adolescent processes, we also examined whether parental behaviors of mothers or fathers differentially influences boys' or girls' coping typologies. In a study of Mexican American families, McHale et al. (2005) reported that mothers displayed higher levels of warmth than fathers but that parental warmth did not vary for daughters versus sons. In contrast, Updegraff et al. (2009) found that maternal knowledge of adolescents' daily activities predicted lower adolescent depressive symptoms for girls but not for boys, whereas paternal knowledge was not associated with adolescents' depressive symptoms. Another study of Latino adolescents found that maternal psychological control was associated negatively with girls' but not boys' self-esteem, whereas paternal psychological control was associated negatively with boys' and girls' self-esteem (Bean & Northrup, 2009). Overall, previous literature is mixed and associations likely depend on the adolescent outcomes of interest.

Previous work on Mexican American families supports the view that females are more likely than their male counterparts to be the cultural keepers of the family and experience gender role socialization to be nurturing, relationship oriented, and seek family for assistance (Knight et al., 2010; McHale et al., 2005). One possibility is that mothers may be more likely than fathers to

provide support-seeking coping suggestions or model these coping behaviors that may be more strongly directed toward girls than boys. Drawing on ecological systems theory and previous research suggesting the importance of gender in family processes, we examined the effects of maternal and paternal behaviors for boys' and girls' coping typologies.

Present Study

The aim of this study was to identify coping typologies to understand individual variation in patterns of coping responses among Mexican American adolescents and to link such typologies to maternal and paternal behaviors. We expected that maternal and paternal support and knowledge would be associated with more support-seeking coping, whereas psychological control would be linked to lower support-seeking coping and greater likelihood of being classified into coping typologies indicative of opposition or escape. In addition, we expected that girls would be more likely to be classified into a coping typology that involves support-seeking coping and would be less likely to be classified into a coping typology characterized by escape coping than boys. The extent to which associations between maternal and paternal behaviors and typology classification would vary across boys and girls also was explored. Overall, this study extends previous research by considering how coping may be shaped within the proximal context of the parent–adolescent relationship and the influences of parent and adolescent gender. Additionally, this study contributes to the literature base by considering these questions among Mexican American families, as a majority of research on parenting and adolescent coping has mostly included European American families (Kuo, 2011).

Method

Procedures and Participants

The larger sample from which the present sample was drawn included 424 adolescents who ranged in age from 13 to 20 years old ($M = 14.77$, $SD = 1.23$). Given the purposes of the present study, we restricted the sample to include adolescents of Mexican descent who ranged in age from 14 to 16 years old ($M = 14.46$, $SD = 0.69$) resulting in a sample size of 367 adolescents. Adolescents in grades 9th, 10th, and 11th were surveyed in their classes in one public high school in a metropolitan area in California. Adolescents were classified as of Mexican descent if they indicated that their father or mother was born in Mexico. The majority of parents were born in Mexico (89%, mothers; 95%, fathers) and on average mothers and fathers lived in the United States for 16 and 18 years, respectively. Most (85%) of the adolescents reported that Spanish was the most frequent language spoken at home and 74% also reported speaking English at home. Among the adolescents, 58% were girls, 71% identified as Catholic, 70% were in two-parent biological families, 67% were born in the United States, and for those born in Mexico the average number of years living in the United States was 10. There was diversity in adolescents' family income, which ranged from \$17,399 to \$70,909 (Median = \$30,405). Self-report surveys were administered in English (all participants spoke English) by bilingual research assistants and signed parental consent (in Spanish and English) was required.

Measures

Parenting Behaviors. Three key parenting behaviors were measured, including parental support, parental knowledge, and psychological control. Adolescents were asked to report on support, knowledge, and psychological control by mothers and fathers using items from the Parent Behavior Measure (Bush et al., 2004). Support was assessed by six items regarding parental warmth, affection, and support for academic achievement (e.g., “this parent has made me feel that she would be there if I needed her”). Parental knowledge was measured by six items that concerned the adolescent’s perception of their parents’ awareness of their whereabouts, friends, and activities (e.g., “this parent knows where I am after school”). Psychological control was measured by adolescent’s perception that their parents attempt to constrain their individual autonomy through love withdrawal (two items) and guilt induction (two items) using four items. Sample items included “avoids looking at me when I have disappointed him/her” (love withdrawal) and “tells me that I will be sorry that I wasn’t better behaved” (guilt induction).

Individual scale items of the respective parenting behavior (support, knowledge, and psychological control) were averaged together with separate constructs for mothers and fathers; higher scores indicated higher support, knowledge, and psychological control. Adolescents responded to all items using a 4-point Likert-type scale from 1 (*strongly agree*) to 4 (*strongly disagree*). Reliability coefficients for each parental behavior subscale were the following: $\alpha = .86$ (maternal support), $\alpha = .90$ (paternal support), $\alpha = .77$ (maternal knowledge), $\alpha = .88$ (paternal knowledge), $\alpha = .76$ (maternal psychological control), and $\alpha = .82$ (paternal psychological control).

Coping Strategies. Coping strategies were measured by the frequency with which adolescents reported using behaviors to manage problems using Patterson and McCubbin’s (1987) Likert-type, Adolescent Coping Orientation for Problem Experiences (A-COPE). The original A-COPE includes a total of 54 items. The larger study from which the current data were drawn did not use the entire 54-item questionnaire and instead used 29 items to minimize the length of the survey. Also, three items were dropped because they were not the focus of the present study (i.e., two items—seeking professional support—and one item—spending time with boyfriends/girlfriends). Adolescents were asked to respond to the following: “When you face difficulties or feel tense how often do you . . .,” which assessed global coping strategies (see Table 2 for the complete wording of each item). Response choices ranged from 1 (*never*) to 5 (*most of the time*).

Data Analyses

Latent profile analysis with Mplus 6.0 was first conducted to identify the number of typologies underlying the 26 continuous indicators of coping (Collins & Lanza, 2010). We compared a number of fit criteria across a sequence of alternative models that specified a range of two to six possible typologies. Akaike’s Informational Criterion (AIC), Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC), Lo-Mendell-Rubin (LMR) Likelihood Ratio Test (LRT), and model entropy were used to compare the relative fit of these models. Models with lower AIC and BIC values and higher entropy are preferred, although, it is also advisable to examine latent typology separation (i.e., how is each typology distinguished from the others based on item-response means), homogeneity of latent typologies, and model interpretability (e.g., typology size and meaningfulness of each

typology) in determining an optimal solution regarding number of typologies. After selecting the number of typologies, the next step included using Mplus 6.0 to conduct a multinomial logistic regression model with maternal and paternal behaviors, and adolescent gender as predictors. Finally, gender-by-maternal and gender-by-paternal support, knowledge, and psychological control product terms were included to consider moderator effects associated with adolescent gender (separate multinomial logistic regression model for each product term).

Missing data were addressed using full information maximum likelihood estimation methods (FIML), which allows for estimation of the models using all available data. In the present analyses, 18 cases were missing on the maternal and paternal behaviors and 9 cases were missing on all the coping behaviors. As a result, 7.4% of the cases were missing and excluded resulting in a sample size of 340 adolescents in the final analyses.

Results

Adolescent Latent Coping Typologies

Although both a three-typology and four-typology solution provided comparably superior fit to these data, the LMR LRT value was nonsignificant ($p = .20$) suggesting that a four-typology model did not fit better (by a significant amount) than the three-typology model (see Table 1). In addition, a four-typology solution would have resulted in two small groups that were mostly similar with the exception of items related to avoidance. Thus, in considering the balance of model fit, parsimony, latent class separation, we selected the three-typology model for further analysis.

Table 1. Comparison of LPA Models: Fit Statistics.

Number of profiles	AIC	BIC	LMR LRT p value	Entropy
2	26300.55	26629.55	.02	.90
3	25593.11	26052.58	.05	.92
4	25341.24	25930.90	.20	.92
5	25219.78	25939.62	.61	.89
6	25157.26	26007.29	.66	.90

Note. LPA = latent profile analysis; AIC = Akaike's informational criterion; BIC = Bayesian information criterion. The bolded numbers indicate the selected LPA 3-profile model.

Table 2 presents the assigned label, the prevalence estimates for the three latent typologies, and the item-means for each adolescent coping item within the respective typologies. The first typology included adolescents (33.8% of the sample) who were classified into a typology we labeled *opposition coping* in which there was a relatively high use of anger coping, venting, and low support-seeking coping. The second typology was labeled *support-seeking coping* (54.7%) and was characterized by adolescents reporting the highest use of seeking support from family, peers, and religion, and the lowest use of escape (behavioral avoidance coping and substance-use) and opposition coping (venting, anger coping, and blaming others). Finally, 11.5% of adolescents were classified as belonging to the third typology, *escape and opposition coping*, and had the highest reported reliance on escape coping (i.e., staying away from home and substance-use coping) and opposition coping strategies (i.e., anger, venting coping, and blaming others); however, members of the third typology also tended to turn to peers for support (e.g., "talk to a friend about how you feel") but less so to parents or religious figures.

Table 2. Coping Typology Conditional Response Means and Overall Sample Means.

Coping variables	Three profile solution			
	Sample means	Opposition (33.8%)	Support seeking (54.7%)	Opposition and escape (11.5%)
Go along with parents' requests and rules	3.63	3.18	4.04	3.01
Try to reason with parents and talk things out; compromise	3.37	2.80	3.81	3.02
Talk to your mother about what bothers you	3.50	2.70	4.09	2.98
Talk to your father about what bothers you	2.67	1.79	3.23	2.76
Do things with your family	3.76	2.90	4.40	3.35
Talk to a brother or sister about how you feel	2.95	2.22	3.42	2.97
Talk to a religious person (e.g., minister, priest, rabbi, bishop, nun)	2.07	1.72	2.29	2.05
Pray	3.13	2.87	3.36	2.85
Go to a place of worship (e.g., mosque, church, temple)	2.52	2.07	2.80	2.50
Apologize to people	3.70	3.22	4.08	3.33
Try to help other people solve their problems	3.73	3.26	4.01	3.74
Say nice things to others	3.84	3.23	4.28	3.59
Be close with someone you care about	4.05	3.59	4.37	3.98
Try to keep up friendships or make new friends	4.02	3.50	4.34	4.04
Talk to a friend about how you feel	3.58	2.96	3.95	3.67
Say mean things to people; be sarcastic	2.20	2.53	1.78	3.23
Swear/Cuss	3.00	3.35	2.55	4.05
Blame others for what's wrong	2.34	2.56	2.02	3.09
Get angry and yell at people	2.64	3.00	2.28	3.24
Let off steam by complaining to family members	2.48	2.59	2.33	2.85
Let off steam by complaining to your friends	2.43	2.31	2.39	3.02
Tell yourself the problem is not important	3.18	2.93	3.33	3.26
Smoke	1.39	1.14	1.03	3.80
Use drugs (not prescribed by a doctor)	1.44	1.29	1.12	3.32
Drink beer, wine, liquor	1.57	1.47	1.22	3.49
Try to stay away from home as much as possible	2.10	2.47	1.62	3.29

Predicting Adolescent Coping Typology Classification

Support-Seeking Versus Opposition Coping. A one unit increase in maternal support ($b = 1.48, p = .001$), paternal support ($b = 0.93, p = .001$), and maternal knowledge ($b = 1.28, p = .002$) were associated, respectively, with a 4.4 (440%), 2.5 (250%), and 3.6 (360%) increase in the odds of being classified into the support-seeking coping typology versus the opposition coping typology. Paternal knowledge ($b = -0.06, p = .86$) and maternal ($b = 0.12, p = .72$) and paternal ($b = -0.02, p = .94$) psychological control were not related to an increased likelihood of adolescents being classified into the support seeking versus the opposition coping typology. Also, girls were 2.6 times more likely than boys to be classified into the support-seeking coping typology compared with the opposition-only coping typology ($b = 0.94, p = .01$).

Support-Seeking Versus Escape and Opposition Coping. A one unit increase in maternal support ($b = 1.78, p = .001$) and maternal knowledge ($b = 0.95, p = .05$) were associated, respectively, with a 5.9 (590%) and 2.6 (260%) increase in the odds of being classified into the support-seeking coping typology compared with the escape and opposition coping typology; however, the effect for maternal knowledge only approached statistical significance. Paternal support ($b = 0.50, p = .19$) and knowledge ($b = 0.59, p = .14$), and maternal ($b = -0.03, p = .94$) and paternal

psychological control ($b = -0.25, p = .50$) were not significant predictors of coping typology membership. Girls were 2.3 times more likely than boys to be classified into the support-seeking coping typology compared with the escape and opposition coping typology; however, this effect was not statistically significant ($b = 0.85, p = .07$).

Gender-by-Parenting Behavior Interactions

In total, six gender-by-parenting behavior interactions were tested within separate models to examine whether the effect of maternal and paternal behaviors on coping typology classification varies for boys and girls. Of the six possible interactions, only one interaction (gender-by-paternal knowledge) was significant ($b = -0.94, p = .04$); however, after accounting for the risk of Type I error and an alpha correction, the interaction was no longer significant. As such, we did not interpret this interaction and concluded that associations between perceived parenting behaviors and coping typologies were similar across boys and girls.

Discussion

Mexican American adolescents face a number of stressors associated with ethnic minority group membership in addition to normative transitions during adolescence (García Coll et al., 1996). Coping with these stressors in ways that are healthy and engages the support of others can help adolescents overcome adversity and promote resilience (Skinner & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2007). As such, it is critically important to identify constructive coping typologies and key predictors of these typologies particularly for Mexican American youth who have been understudied in the coping literature (Kuo, 2011). Consistently, studies describe the importance of parents as key socializing agents and yet, no studies were identified that examined associations between Mexican American parenting behaviors and adolescents' coping typologies. The present study sought to address this gap by examining the influence of three key parental behaviors on adolescents' coping typologies using a within-group design. Additionally, parent and adolescent gender were considered given the potential variability in family processes because of gender socialization norms within Mexican American families (Raffaelli & Ontai, 2004).

Mexican American Adolescents' Coping Typologies

The present study identified three coping typologies: (a) opposition coping, (b) support-seeking coping, and (c) escape and opposition coping. Previous studies also have reported somewhat similar coping typologies (i.e., support-seeking coping and escape and opposition coping; Aldridge & Roesch, 2008; Seiffge-Krenke & Klessinger, 2000); however, some differences did exist. First, the current study identified an opposition-only coping typology whereas the other studies did not. As a result, we were able to separate groups of adolescents who tended to cope using primarily opposition coping strategies from those who used both escape and opposition coping. A key implication of this finding is that there might be different intervention points for adolescents across these typologies. For example, adolescents within the escape and opposition coping typology who primarily externalized their feelings while also using alcohol or drugs with peers when faced with problems may require substance-use intervention at the level of the peer group in addition to learning constructive coping strategies. Key intervention points also include increasing parental support and knowledge to promote

adolescents' support-seeking coping from prosocial support resources (e.g., family, peers, and religion), and decrease reliance on opposition and escape coping strategies and support from a deviant peer group. Additionally, the present study was the first study to our knowledge to utilize a within-group design to identify Mexican American adolescents' coping typologies.

Second, the present study included multiple domains of seeking support (i.e., seeking support from family, close peers, and religion), which allowed for differentiation among coping typologies by sources of support that adolescents may be more or less likely to utilize. For example, there were two typologies where adolescents were relatively likely to seek support from peers. One group was the support-seeking coping typology where peer support occurred along with seeking support from parents and religion, as well as, low substance use or venting of anger. The other group (escape and opposition coping typology) combined seeking support from peers with relatively low reliance on parents and greater staying away from home and using substances. The latter typology points to a peer orientation where adolescents under stress "hang out" away from home, use substances to cope, and focus on and vent their negative emotions (e.g., anger coping, blaming others). Finally, the third group (opposition coping typology) primarily used anger, venting, and blaming others to cope with stress and reported the lowest reliance on support-seeking coping across any domain of support. Thus, one potential implication is the need to consider the *source* of support in combination with other commonly used coping strategies by adolescents.

Linkages Among Maternal and Paternal Behaviors and Adolescent Coping Typologies

As predicted by ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) and stress and coping theory (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) parental behaviors such as support and knowledge are indicative of important proximal processes and coping resources, and also more likely to be associated with constructive coping typologies triggered by challenge appraisals than maladaptive coping typologies triggered by threat appraisals. Overall, our results indicated that maternal and paternal support, and maternal knowledge played a primary role in distinguishing adolescent coping typologies, whereas maternal and paternal psychological control were unrelated to being classified into the support-seeking coping typology above and beyond parenting that is more supportive-connected. For example, supportive and knowledgeable parents may be more likely to know about their adolescents' problems, suggest and model support-seeking coping strategies, and help adolescents appraise stressors as challenges that can be overcome through the supportive familial context (Kliewer, Sandler, & Wolchik, 1994; Swanson et al., 2010).

The present study also filled a gap in previous research on the linkages among Mexican American paternal and maternal behaviors and adolescent coping. Specifically findings indicated that maternal *and* paternal support and maternal knowledge were associated with adolescents' increased likelihood of being classified into the support-seeking coping typology relative to the opposition coping typology. In the second comparison, maternal support was associated with an increase in the odds of being classified into the support-seeking coping typology compared with the escape and opposition coping typology. Maternal knowledge was similarly associated with adolescents' increased likelihood of being classified into the support-seeking coping typology relative to the escape and opposition coping typology. However, this association was not at the level of traditional significance ($p = .05$) potentially because of low statistical power ($n = 39$;

escape and opposition coping typology), and therefore caution should be used when interpreting this result.

To understand the unique effects of maternal support and knowledge found across comparisons there are several explanations worthy of further consideration. First, one explanation is that differentiated gender-role expectations may influence the consistency of parents' provision of support and the extent of their knowledge of their adolescent's daily activities. In a study of Mexican American adolescents, Crockett et al. (2007) found that parental role expectations for mothers focused on caring for their children and household duties whereas fathers were expected to work to support the family. Thus, Latino mothers' greater involvement in day-to-day activities with their children (Hossain & Shipman, 2009), and acceptance and knowledge about their adolescent's daily activities (Updegraff et al., 2009) may explain why maternal support and knowledge are strong predictors of adolescents' typology of support-seeking coping in the present study. Additionally, another study found that maternal ethnic socialization of familism values was uniquely associated with Mexican American adolescents' increased utilization of familial support, reliance on religion, and acceptance of familial obligations across early adolescence (Knight et al., 2011), suggesting that mothers were particularly important in shaping adolescents' internalization of values that may promote support-seeking coping. Moreover, in the present study, when parenting behaviors are included in the same model, paternal support or knowledge may be more supplemental in nature whereas maternal behaviors may be less variable given cultural expectations regarding the direct role of mothers in promoting closeness in the family.

A second alternative explanation is that the measurement of mothering versus fathering may be biased toward behaviors primarily used by mothers. The measure of parental support used in the present study focused on the provision of emotional support with an emphasis placed on showing direct signs of affection and warmth and fewer items that assessed instrumental support. For example, one study found that Mexican American mothers were viewed as more physically and verbally affectionate than fathers who were viewed as showing their love through indirect means (e.g., "just being there" or providing money; Crockett et al., 2007). In another study of Mexican American families, fathers' source of knowledge was more indirect (reliance on spouse) whereas mothers' were more direct (e.g., adolescent disclosure); however, both were equally protective (Blocklin, Crouter, Updegraff, & McHale, 2011). As such, future research should consider how maternal and paternal effects may vary depending on the types of support and sources of knowledge assessed (Cabrera & Bradley, 2012) and the relative importance for adolescents' coping.

The Role of Adolescent Gender in Adolescent Coping Typologies

Overall, results were consistent with Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological theory that gender is an important person characteristic that can influence adolescents' developmental outcomes such as adolescents' coping typologies. For example, girls were more likely than boys to be classified into the support-seeking coping typology than the opposition coping typology. Differences between boys and girls were not found in the comparison between support-seeking coping typology and the escape and opposition coping typology; although this may have been because of small sample size in the latter typology. The patterning of results suggested that girls are more

likely than boys to belong to support-seeking coping typologies compared with other types of coping. This conclusion is supported by previous research that Mexican American girls more readily seek support than boys (Kobus & Reyes, 2000), and Latino girls are less likely than boys to engage in escape behaviors (substance use; Lac et al., 2011).

One explanation for the gender difference found in the present study may be the influence of gender socialization norms (e.g., emphasis on household tasks and caregiving responsibilities) that tend to be more strongly directed toward girls than boys within Mexican immigrant families with stronger ties to Mexican culture (McHale et al., 2005). Moreover, if girls are more restricted to spend time at home whereas boys are granted greater freedom due to gender-role expectations within Latino families (Raffaelli & Ontai, 2004), girls may be more likely than boys to be exposed to family members' messages or coping responses that emphasize seeking support when coping with challenges. Thus, future studies might examine the extent to which gender socialization processes (e.g., gender-role expectations, messages, parental modeling) play a role in how overall family dynamics are associated with coping for boys and girls, which could be particularly relevant for Mexican American families.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

Several limitations should be considered. First, the study design was cross-sectional and limited to an examination of parenting and adolescent coping typologies during mid-adolescence. Moreover, one possibility not measured in this study is that associations between parenting and adolescents' coping typologies are bidirectional processes. Studies with longitudinal data sets could examine both parent and child effects over time. We also acknowledge that other social partners (siblings, extended family members, teachers, peers) may be important predictors of the ways adolescents cope with stress and that adolescents may utilize other coping strategies that were not measured in this study, but should be examined in future research. Additionally, the present study is limited to a region of the country that has a longer history of Mexican American families and a specific school within this area. Moreover, the role of context (school, neighborhood, and region) should be explored in future research to examine in what ways contextual differences influence adolescents' coping typologies. Another limitation is that the study relied solely on adolescent report and as a result the parameter estimates may be inflated due to shared method variance. Finally, given that the present study did not find evidence of a moderating effect of adolescent gender, future research also may need to examine gender-role expectations utilizing a within-family design to uncover more nuanced associations.

Conclusion

Despite these limitations, our study extended previous literature by identifying three distinct coping typologies using a within-group design of Mexican American adolescents. Additionally, the present study highlighted that parental support and knowledge were key influences on adolescents' support-seeking coping whereas psychological control was not a significant predictor. Thus, when adolescents' perceive greater warmth and connection with their parents they also may perceive greater coping resources that they can turn to for help, and as a result tend to cope by seeking support across multiple domains of their lives instead of relying on opposition and escape coping strategies. It also may be the case that parental support and

knowledge are particularly strong predictors of Mexican American adolescents' support-seeking coping typology because of the broader cultural context in which parenting and coping occurs within Mexican American families (Kuo, 2011). For example, cultural socialization messages that promote the importance of family support and reliance on religion likely co-occurs with parental support and knowledge to varying degrees within Mexican American families. Although future research is needed that includes cultural factors (e.g., cultural values—familism, religion, cultural socialization messages) to understand how cultural context shapes associations between parenting behaviors and adolescents' coping typologies, the present study contributes to an emerging literature base on normative family processes within Mexican American families that is consistent with the view that parental support and knowledge are important parental behaviors for healthy adolescent developmental outcomes. Additionally, the unique effects of maternal support and knowledge suggested that additional research on Latino families is needed to examine maternal and paternal behaviors in the same model to understand parents' role in shaping youths' coping outcomes.

The practical implications of this study include bolstering Mexican American parent–adolescent relationships in ways that increase support and knowledge about their adolescent's daily activities, creating a context that promotes more constructive coping responses (e.g., support-seeking coping) and decreases coping responses that are more often linked to maladaptive outcomes over time (e.g., opposition and escape coping). Additionally, prevention and intervention programs should target both boys and girls in efforts to help them establish a coping typology of constructive coping responses and also recognize that boys may need additional encouragement to seek out supportive others when faced with stress.

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