Racial/Ethnic Socialization Messages, Social Support, and Personal Efficacy among Adolescents

Francesca Pernice-Duca
Wayne State University

Delila Owens
Wayne State University

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Abstract

Associations between ethnic socialization and a sense of personal efficacy were explored among African-American, Hispanic, and Caucasian adolescents. We found that those who reported greater intimacy with their mothers were more likely to perceive them as sources of race-related socialization messages. Consisting of primarily African-American and Latino youths, members of this group were encouraged by their mothers to demonstrate greater racial and ethnic pride. In contrast, Caucasian youths were more likely to see their mothers as purveyors of tolerance and cooperation between diverse populations. A separate analysis involving the African-American subset revealed that adolescents who received messages imparting strong cultural and racial pride were related to reporting a greater sense of personal efficacy.

Racial/Ethnic Socialization

Research examining attitudes and perceptions about one's ethnic and racial reference group has documented the importance of these attitudes to the socialization process and psychological well-being of adolescents representing racial minority and ethnically diverse reference groups (Gushue, 2006; Murry-McBride, Berkel, Brody, Miller, & Chen, 2009; Phinney & Chavira, 1995; Rotheram-Borus, 1990). Commonly referred to as *racial socialization,* this process encompasses all race-related, parental communication to children that serves to influence the adoption of persistent race-related attitudes and behaviors into a child or adolescent's self-schema (Bowman & Howard, 1985; Hughes & Johnson, 2001). The term, as utilized in this paper, reflects what Hughes, Rodriguez, Smith, Johnson, Stevenson, & Spicer (2006) deemed an acceptable, integrated construct to capture messages transmitted about cultural customs, traditions, ethnic and racial pride as well as societal challenges for the group. These attitudes and behaviors in turn directly or indirectly affect the ways in which children may cope with the challenges of adult society.

In many racial and ethnic families, parents and other members of the extended family or community are actively involved in the rearing and socialization of children (Harrison, Wilson, Pine, Chan, & Buriel, 1990; McAdoo, 1999). Mothers have been frequently cited as the most significant source of information concerning one's ethnicity or racial reference group (Harrison, Stewart, Myambo, & Teveraishe, 1995, 1997); however, educators become equally important as parental socialization agents by transmitting messages of the culture's standards and expectations for behavior (Hess & Holloway, 1984; Wentzel & Looney, 2007). Thus, educators, like parents, are an important part of a youth's social network embedded in the larger social ecology that supports the development of a youth's identity, socialization skills, and personal efficacy (Harrison et al., 1990). In this context,

educators may also call upon their status as authority figures to stop the perpetuation of negative racial stereotypes as well as provide students with corrective social experiences that support healthy identity constructions and positive race-relations (Beach, Thein, & Parks, 2008). For example, while African-American parents may emphasize messages of spirituality and racial pride, they also try to actively prepare their children for racial bias and racial mistrust in many social arenas, including the school (Caughy, O'Campo, Randolph, & Nickerson, 2002). Educators, in particular, may serve an especially important role in this process as young people see the rules and expectations established at home put into practice in the real world (Howard, & del Rosario, 2000).

Racial/ Ethnic Socialization and Personal Efficacy

Sociocultural theory in education emphasizes the role of social interaction and cultural heritage in childhood development. Parents, peers and teachers are all important to reinforcing prescribed ways of thinking about the environment. The way in which children learn to cope and deal effectively with their environment often plays out in important developmental arenas, such as the school setting and with educators. The shared responsibility between parents and educators is often viewed as a joint commitment to helping children become healthy and productive adults. Fostering a strong sense of racial or ethnic identity has been found to be an essential component in the development of social competencies within a youth's given culture (Gushue, 2006; Tiejen, 1989). However, it can be challenging for parents to maintain a healthy sense of cultural pride in their children, who remain immersed within a larger culture that imposes implicit prejudices or discrimination (McAdoo, 1978). In response to this challenge, Ogbu (2002) has identified socialization tactics rooted in a history of racial separatism. Ogbu's work suggests that resistance cultures socialize youths to reject mainstream culture and the associated culture of

school, encouraging them to risk school failure simply to avoid becoming part of mainstream American or too "White." Alternatively, in a study conducted nearly two decades ago, Demo and Hughes (1990), found that youths were less likely to have separatist views about their race if they adopted a more individualistic orientation toward their racial group. The current investigation is designed to add to the emergence of studies recognizing the relationship between racial socialization messages and socioemotional functioning (Bannon, McKay, Chacko, Rodriguez, & Cavaleri, 2009), academic achievement, behavioral competencies, and family interactions (Hughes & Chen, 1999). Emerging research has demonstrated that parental reinforcement of higher levels of positive racial identity is associated with greater socioemotional well-being as compared to parents who endorse lower levels of cultural pride messages (Bannon et al., 2009). Bannon et al. (2009) found that strong racial or ethnic socialization messages and practices also served to buffer against risk factors for the development of mental health problems, such as anxiety. Given this previous investigation, it seems warranted to investigate the association between the type of racial socialization message transmitted to adolescents and the relationship to a personal sense of efficacy.

Source and Type of Ethnic Socialization Message

Among various racial and ethnic groups, African-American, Japanese, and Latino families provide more ethnic socialization messages that reinforce cultural pride and knowledge than Caucasian families (Quintana & Vera, 1999; Stevenson, 1994; Umaña-Taylor & Yazedjian, 2006). African-American parents are also more likely to report talking to their children about race and ethnicity as well as strategies to handle prejudice more often than Latino parents. (Phinney & Chavira,1995). African-American parents are also less likely to convey messages of pride in one's cultural heritage than prepare children for the prejudice and discrimination they will experience (Hughes & Chen, 1997). In contrast, Caucasian parents tend to promote attitudes of tolerance and equality (Hughes, et al., 2008). Hamm (2001) noted that White parents may reinforce the *colorblind* perspective to their children and that minority groups must assimilate to mainstream behaviors (p. 67). The likelihood of parents imparting messages of racial socialization to their children tends to remain stable across demographic variables such as level of income or education (Thornton, Chatters, Taylor, & Allen, 1990). For instance, Phinney and Chavira (1995) found that independent of socioeconomic status, African-American parents emphasize goals of personal achievement and coping strategies to cope with the mainstream culture, whereas Latino and Japanese parents place greater emphasis on cultural pride more than any other group while also stressing achievement. In fact, Gushue (2006) found that positive ethnic identity had a direct and positive influence on career aspirations and personal efficacy among Latino adolescents.

The importance of personal efficacy beliefs in fostering a positive orientation toward education has been consistently documented in a number of studies (Bandura, 2001; Martin, 2004; Pajares, 2009). Personal efficacy is defined as an individual's subjective beliefs and perceived ability to handle a particular kind of task (Bandura, 1977), which is predictive of both academic aspirations (Bassi, Steca, Fave, & Caprara, 2007) and later adult career choices (Pinquart, Juang, & Silbereisen, 2004). Personal efficacy beliefs are a central tenet of Social Cognitive Theory—Bandura's (1977) grand theory of human behavior. The personal efficacy precept provides a framework for understanding how beliefs about our abilities or capacities influence whether we approach certain tasks optimistically or pessimistically, engage in tasks with high or low motivation, or preserve in the face of difficulty (Bandura, 1986). Individuals may have beliefs about their personal efficacy in a variety of domains ranging from academic ability to a more global sense of personal efficacy which involves the belief that one has the capacity to have an effect or control thier environment (Bandura, 1997, 2001).

During adolescence, youth are experiencing both psychological and physical changes (Freiberg, 2000), and an adolescent's personal efficacy beliefs can be critical to their emotional development and later adult lives (Bacchini & Magliulo, 2004). Yet, studies involving African-American and Latino adolescents with respect to ethnic socialization and its link to personal efficacy and later outcomes have been scattered (see Harrison-Hale, McLoyd, & Smedley, 2004; Huynh & Fuligni, 2008). In a recent study, Kerpelman, Eryigit and Stephens (2008) found that ethnic identity, maternal support, and personal efficacy were predictive of future orientation toward education, particularly for African-American youths. Huynh and Fuligni (2008) demonstrated that adolescents from Mexican, Chinese, and European backgrounds with higher levels of cultural socialization were more motivated toward the attainment of a quality education in their lives. Further, having parents who promoted greater mistrust of other ethnic groups was predictive of lower overall GPA among their children.

Bowman and Howard's (1985) original study provided an initial investigation of race-related socialization messages, personal efficacy and subsequent academic achievement among African-American youth. They examined families across two generational lines (i.e., parents and grandparents), and found positive race-related socialization messages highly correlated to academic achievement, motivation, and personal efficacy among a sample of African-American youths. Bowman and Howard's study also revealed that transgenerational messages; that is, messages transmitted from relatives one generation removed, such as grandparents, emphasized a strong sense of personal development as well as individual and group responsibility. Their study emphasized the importance of familial socialization messages that provide youths with race-relation strategies that made them cognizant of specific social disparities in society. African-American youths who received such messages, either orienting them toward racial equality or racial pride, were more likely to have higher personal efficacy scores than those who did not receive any

socialization message. More recently, Hughes, Witherspoon, Rivas-Drake, and West-Bey (2009), found that positive ethnic/racial socialization messages directly influenced students academic efficacy even when controlling for the student's level of self-esteem.

Study Objectives

The interest in ethnic and racial socialization is well documented in the literature, with studies going back as far as 1937 (see Hughes et al., 2006 for review). For the current investigation, Bowman and Howard's (1985) methods utilized in their classic study sets the foundation for the current investigation. Here, questions to assess adolescents' perceptions of their mothers imparting messages of ethnic or cultural socialization were gathered using two open-ended questions from Bowman and Howard (1985) ethnic socialization instrument. The sample study includes students in high school, because they are more likely than younger children to acknowledge and understand ethnic or racial socialization messages (Hughes & Chen, 1997,1999).

We predicted that African-American and Latino youths would report receiving ethnic or race-related socialization messages from their mothers, whereas Caucasian youths would be more likely to report receiving socialization messages of tolerance or "getting along" with other groups. It is expected that African-American and Latino youths who receive race-related socialization messages that reinforce identities to the ethnic reference group will report high personal efficacy scores, whereas youths who do not receive such messages or instead receive messages reinforcing an individual orientation without reference to an ethnic or racial group would have lower personal efficacy scores.

Three groups of adolescents from three separate communities were sampled from a larger study examining personal efficacy. Communities were selected on the basis of majority representation of the racial or ethnic group. This method was employed in order to increase the probability that children would adopt the attitudes and values of the larger community's reference group. In addition, adolescents tend to report being members of ethnically, racially and socially economically homogenous cliques (Ennett & Bauman, 1996).

Methods

Participants

A total of 171 high-school adolescents between the ages of 15 and 17 participated in this study. A total of 69 African-American (33 males, 36 females), 34 Latino (11 males, 21 females), and 68 Caucasian (34 males, 34 females) youths were selected from representative populations of the adolescents' ethnic and racial reference groups. Each sample was obtained from the same state. The sample of Latino youths were selected from a high school with a large Latino population, comprised of the descendents of migrant workers in a mid-western state. The African-American youths were selected from an inner-city high school made up of 98% African-American students and located in a larger metropolitan area within the Midwest. The Caucasian sample of adolescents was selected from a high school in a predominately Caucasian small town. The majority of the African-American students reported living in one-parent homes as compared to Caucasian and Latino students.

Procedures

Each school was contacted by a member of the research team to assist in setting up procedures and recruiting students. Both parents and students were briefed about the nature of the study, and parents were required to provide informed consent for their son or daughter to participate. Students who were permitted to participate were also asked to give their own consent to participate. A research team member administered the test protocol in the classroom setting in each school. Students who were allowed to participate in the study were asked to individually complete the protocol within the context of a classroom setting. The research team member remained in the room during the time that students completed the measure to ensure that responses were independently completed.

Measures

Social support. The Network of Relationship Inventory (NRI; Furman & Buhrmester, 1992) was utilized to assess the perception of interpersonal support and relations among members of the adolescent's social network. The NRI is composed of a 41-item scale asking the same set of questions for up to six people in the youth's social network (e.g., mother, father, favorite relative, favorite teacher, best friend, and sibling). Adolescents were asked to read each statement and appraise the quality of support and interpersonal relations with each network member using a five-point scale (1 = little to none to 5 = extremely). The measure was analyzed using the five constructs based on Harrison et al. (1997) factor analysis. The subscales were summed and averaged for each member of the network (e.g., mother, father, relative, teacher, best friend, and sibling). Cronbach alphas for each subscale were computed for each member of the network. The range of alphas scores are presented from low to high for each NRI factor across and each network member: Intimacy subscale (3 items), $\alpha = .52$, and .90, Reliable Affection (6 items), $\alpha = .84$ and .94, Self-Enhancing Assistance (7 items), $\alpha = .75$ and .92, Conflict and Discipline (5 items), $\alpha = .52$ and .80, and Companionship (3 items), $\alpha = .63$ and .83. The NRI also yielded an aggregate measure of support from each member of the social network.

Given that other studies have demonstrated that mothers typically provide messages of ethnic identity to their children, the *Intimacy* factor of the NRI for mothers was selected for subsequent analyses examining the probability of receiving an ethnic socialization message. Level of intimacy with moth-

ers was characterized as the degree to which one feels he/she can trust their mother with personal information and feels close enough to share personal experiences (Harrison et al., 1997). Cronbach alpha for this subscale for mothers was .86.

Ethnic/racial socialization message. The extent to which students identified with an ethnic/racial reference group and related messages pertaining to that cultural group were measured using an instrument developed by Bowman and Howard (1985). The measure contains two open-ended questions that ask respondents to describe messages about his or her given cultural or ethnic group. Responses were categorized as either "group oriented" or "individual oriented" following Bowman and Howard's coding system. Each response was coded by two independent coders with agreement between them reaching *kappa* = .88. Question one was designed to assess whether youth consciously acknowledged receiving an overt message [i.e., *When you were a child, were there things your mother did or told you to help you know what it is to be an African American/Latino/Caucasian (or White)?*]. If youths recall receiving a message, a follow-up question prompted them to describe the type of messages they received (i.e., *If yes, what are the most important things she taught you?*). Responses to the follow-up questions were coded as either "group-oriented" or "individual-oriented." Responses were coded as group-oriented if youth described themselves as being driven toward achievement, accomplishments and pride in their ethnic group as a "group." Group oriented responses included messages that emphasized cultural history, loyalty and commitment, family history stressing ethnicity, racial barriers for the group and how to overcome them. For example, "to be proud of my culture…my mother told me about where I came from and there are some things I have to do to make it in life as an African American." Other responses coded as group oriented included "all my ancestors are White."

Responses were coded "individual oriented" if the youth was driven toward individual achievement without reference to an ethnic/racial reference group. Messages contained statements for what the youth had to do as an individual that is, emphasizing self-effort without reference to group self-development or achievement. For example, "I had to learn to fight for the things I want," or "…don't let anyone stop you from achieving your dreams."

Table 1
Questions Based on Bowman and Howard, (1985) Ethnic Socialization Construct

Questions:

1. When you were a child, were there things your mother did or told you to help you know what it is to be an African-American/Latino/Caucasian (or White)?

   1a. If yes, what are the most important things she taught you?

2. Are there any other things your mother told you about how to get along with other ethnic or racial groups?

   2a. If yes, what are the most important things she taught you?

Question two on Bowman and Howard (1985) questionnaire asked respondents to indicate whether they perceived their mother as imparting a message about "getting along" with other ethnic/ racial groups (i.e., *Are there any other things your mother told you about how to get along with other ethnic or racial groups?*). If youths indicated receiving such messages, then a follow-up question prompted them to describe these messages (i.e., *If yes, what are the most important things she taught you?*). Responses to this question were also coded as "group- oriented getting along message " and "individual- oriented getting along message." For this question, group-oriented getting along responses referred to messages instructing youths to relate to others as a reflection of the larger ethnic or racial group or as part of the group. Individual-oriented getting along codes referred to messages instructing youths to relate to others as an "individual"— independent from the individuals' ethnic, cultural or racial reference group.

Personal efficacy. A ten-item Personal Efficacy Scale, adapted from Bowman and Howard (1985) and the work of Gurin and Epps (1974), was used to measure a global sense of personal efficacy , typically over their immediate environment, as well as the extent to which the youth feels prepared or capable to handle tasks in the environment. A five-point Likert-type scale assessed the extent of agreement across 10 statements (α = .92; 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree), such as "*You can do just about anything you really set your mind to; What happens in your life is often beyond your control.*"

Results

Gender, Ethnicity, and Ethnic/Racial Socialization Message

Data regarding ethnic socialization messages were of the following: (a) yes/no responses to two closed-ended socialization questions, and (b) socialization themes derived from coding the responses from two open-ended race-related questions. Open-ended responses were coded by two independent coders, each assigning one of three mutually exclusive socialization experiences codes derived from patterns within the socialization experiences. For the question inquiring about the type ethnic/racial socialization message received, responses were coded as (1) individual-orientation, (2) group-orientation, and (3) no message transmitted/acknowledged. For the question inquiring about the type of "getting along" with other racial groups message, responses were coded as (1) individual-orientation getting along message, (2) group-orientation getting along message, and (3) no getting along message transmitted/acknowledged. There was no relationship between how race-related socialization responses were coded and how race relation responses were coded across the three ethnic groups.

Gender. First, the probability of receiving a socialization message was examined by the youth's gender. A 2 (gender)

x 2 (message) Chi-Square test indicated that the relationship between gender and the likelihood of receiving a socialization message was not significant, χ^2 (1, N = 171) = 1.53, *ns*, indicating that both girls and boys were equally likely to acknowledge a race-related message. There were also no significant differences related to family configuration (e.g., one versus two parent families) and the likelihood of receiving a race-related socialization message, χ^2 (1, N = 171) = .14, *ns.*

Ethnicity. Second, ethnicity was examined in relation to the perceptions of receiving a race-related socialization message. A 2 (message) x 3 (ethnicity) Chi-Square test indicated that the relationship between receiving a message (i.e., yes or no) and ethnicity (e.g., African American, Latino, Caucasian) was significant, χ^2 (1, N = 171) = 32.40, p < .01. As expected, the proportion of African-American (57%) and Latino (71%) youths who perceived their mothers imparting a race-related socialization message was greater than those perceived by Caucasian youth (19%). African American and Latino adolescents who perceived greater intimacy with their mother were more likely to perceive their mothers imparting such messages, F (1,102) = 5.22, p < .05. This finding confirms what early studies have found in terms of how the quality of the mother-child relationship can influence whether a socialization message is shared (e.g., Bowman & Howard, 1985; Hughes & Chen, 1997).

Ethnic/Racial Socialization Message and Social Support

Type of message. The type of race-related socialization message imparted by mothers was examined across all three ethnic/racial groups. In response to the first question—*When you were a child, were there things your mother did or told you to help you know what it is to be an African American/Latino/Caucasian (or White)? If yes, what are the most important things she taught you?*)—African-American youths indicated messages that equally imparted either a group or individual orientation, whereas Latinos were more likely to receive a message imparting a group orientation toward their ethnic group. Caucasian youths were equally likely to receive race-related messages reinforcing an individual orientation or not acknowledging a message about Caucasians, (77.9%), χ^2 (4, N = 171) = 32.80, p < *.001*, Cramer's phi (ø) = .31. Again, African-American and Latino youths who appraised greater intimacy with their mothers on the social support network questionnaire were more likely to indicate receiving some type of socialization message, F(2, 101) = 4.96, p < .01.

The second race-related socialization message in the study was based on Bowman and Howard's (1985) measure asking youths to indicate whether they perceived their mother as imparting a message about "getting along" with other groups and to describe the type of getting along message they received. The likelihood of adolescents in this sample acknowledging their mother imparting a race-relations message was not linked to family configuration (e.g., single vs. two parent homes), the level of social support from mothers, or the level of intimacy with their mothers. .

A 2 (gender) x 2 (message) Chi-Square indicated that girls and boys were equally likely to perceive their mothers imparting a message of "getting along," with other racial or ethnic groups, χ^2 (1, N = 171) = 3.75, p < .05. A 2 (type of getting along message) x 3 (ethnicity) chi-square indicated that all adolescents were more likely to receive a message of getting along than an ethnic/racial socialization message, but Latino (75%) and Caucasian (55%) youths were proportionately more likely to receive a message directing them how to get along with other ethnic/racial groups than African-American youths (42%), χ^2 (1, N = 171) 9.63, p < .01. Although Caucasian youths were less likely to receive a message imparting specific ethnic/ racial group identity, they were five times more likely to receive messages instructing them how to relate to other ethnic/racial groups (p < *.01)*.

Table 2
Racial and Ethnic Socialization Messages by Ethnicity

	Participants		
	African-American *n* (%)	Latino *n* (%)	Caucasian *n* (%)
Type of Message	Ethnic/racial socialization message		
Nothing transmitted about my group	33 (46.5%)	12 (37.5%)	53 (77.9%)
Racial Pride and commitment to group emphasized (Group Orientation)	19 (26.8%)	4 (12.5%)	12 (17.6%)
Self-development and achievement emphasized (Individual Orientation)	19 (26.8%)	16 (50%)	3 (4.4%)
	Getting along, race-relations messages		
Nothing transmitted about how to get along with other groups	42 (59.2%)	10 (31.2%)	29 (47.4%)
Treat others as belonging to the larger ethnic/racial group (Group Orientation)	13 (18.3%)	7 (21.9%)	35 (20.5%)
Treat others as individuals, independent of ethnic/racial group (Individual Orientation)	16 (22.5%)	15 (46.9%)	55 (32.2%)

Open-ended responses to the question about "*getting along*" with other ethnic/racial groups were coded for messages describing either a group-orientation or an individual-orientation toward getting along with other cultural, racial, and ethnic reference groups. For this question, group-orientation getting along messages referred to messages instructing youths to relate to others as belonging to the larger ethnic/racial group. That is, characteristics ascribed to an individual were reflective of the group as a whole. Individual-orientation getting along messages referred to messages instructing youths to relate to others as individuals, independent of behaviors or beliefs held about the larger ethnic/racial reference group. Both girls and boys were equally likely to receive messages about getting along with other racial/ethnic groups, χ^2 (2, $N = 171$) = 4.26, *ns*. There were also no differences across ethnic groups as to who was more likely to perceive a group versus an individual orientation message, χ^2 (4, $N = 171$) = 8.84, *ns*. Of those youths who received a "getting along" message, over half (61%) perceived their mother as instructing them to treat others as individuals, regardless of their reference group identification.

Social support. A MANOVA was performed to examine the type of race-related messages about getting along (individual-orientation, group orientation, and no message) and the degree of social support from each type of social network member (e.g., mother, father, relative, teacher, best friend, and sibling). Youths who indicated relating to other racial groups with an individual orientation varied by level of of social support, Pillai's Trace = .12, F(12, 322) = 1.82, $p < .05$. Given a significant MANOVA, individual univariate effects between subjects were examined. Although only a small effect was found, the results indicated that the total support from mothers, F(2, 169) = 4.23, $p < .05$, and teachers F(2, 169) = 5.78, $p < .01$ were higher for youths who acknowledged receiving ethnic/racial getting along messages to treat others as individuals, compared to youths who acknowledged messages about treating others as part of the ethnic/racial group, or those who did not acknowledge receiving a race-related getting along message at all.

Personal Efficacy

Personal efficacy scores ranged from low to high, with an average of 36.5 and standard deviation of 5.0. The results of a 3(ethnic group) x 2 (gender) MANOVA revealed no main effects for ethnicity F(5, 165) = 1,89, *ns* and gender F(5, 165) = 1.40, *ns* on personal efficacy scores. Therefore, we examined the relationship between the type of ethnic socialization message and level of personal efficacy among a subset of the sample in this study most likely to receive ethnic or racial socialization messages.

African-American Adolescent Sub-Sample-Ethnic/Social Socialization Messages, Efficacy, and Social Support

Type of message. According to previous research, African-American youths are more likely to receive or acknowledge a race-related socialization message. Therefore,

the African-American sub-sample was analyzed for variations in social network support and personal efficacy scores across the type of ethnic/racial socialization message (group orientation vs. individual orientation vs. no message). Ethnic/racial socialization messages – *individual-orientation, group-orientation, and no message groups*- were analyzed by the quality of the social network support with mothers, fathers, relatives, siblings, and teachers. The MANOVA of the NRI factors for mothers was significant, Wilks lambda = .70, F(3, 68) = 2.43, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .29$. A further examination revealed that youths who reported greater levels of intimacy with their mothers were more likely to perceive their mothers imparting an ethnic/racial socialization messages emphasizing an individual orientation, F(2, 69) = 4.04, $p < .05$.

Type of message and personal efficacy. A one-way ANOVA revealed that youths who acknowledged their mothers imparting a socialization message orienting them toward their African-American reference group (group-orientation) were significantly more likely to have higher personal efficacy scores than those who received an individual-orientation socialization message or no message at all, F (2, 69) = 3.59, $p < .05$. Similarly, we examined personal efficacy scores and the type of race-related getting along message. A one-way ANOVA revealed no significant differences in personal efficacy scores across the three types of messages (i.e., individual-orientation, group-orientation, and no message), F(2,69) = .42, *ns*. Youths who received race-related getting along messages had similar personal efficacy scores to those who received messages orienting them toward their racial group.

Type of message and social support. We further examined whether quality of support varied across African-American youth who were oriented to treat others as either part of an ethnic/racial group, as individuals, or who did not, in fact, receive a message at all. MANOVAs were performed to examine the relationship between the quality of support from mothers, fathers, relatives, siblings, and teachers and race-related getting along orientation (Group vs. Individual vs. No message). The multivariate effect for orientation, Wilks lambda = .61, F(5, 67) = 3.44, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = 39$, was accompanied by significant univariate effects on the father's self-enhancing assistance, F(2, 69) = 3.4, $p = .03$, father's companionship, F(2, 69) = 4.97, $p < .05$, father's conflict-discipline, F(2,69) = 10.57, $p < .01$, and father's affection, F(2,69) = 4.15, $p < .05$. African-American youths who were oriented to treat others as individuals reported their relationships with their fathers as significantly greater in the areas of affection and companionship, with less conflict and greater discipline from fathers. The same patterns emerged for teachers, except the intimacy subscale was excluded from the analysis because students were less likely to have variability on this factor for teachers. A significant multivariate effect for orientation, Wilks' lambda = .76, F(4, 67) = 2.31, $p < .05$, $\eta^2 = .24$, was accompanied by significant univariate effects on teacher self-enhancing assistance, F(2, 69) = 4.26, $p < .01$, teacher companionship, F(2, 69) = 3.58, $p < .05$, teacher

conflict-discipline, $F(2,69) = 3.94$, $p < .05$, and teacher affection, $F(2,69) = 4.70$, $p < .01$. Again, African-American youths oriented to treat others as individuals were much more likely to be the recipients of greater support from teachers in the form of self-enhancing assistance, companionship, affection, less conflict and greater discipline than those who were instructed to treat others as part of the racial/ethnic reference group.

Discussion

We initially hypothesized that greater intimacy between mothers and adolescents would be indicative of communication that allows the parent to nurture self-empowerment and pride in the student's ethnic or racial background. Further, we examined the type of messages adolescents' acknowledged receiving, specifically about their orientation to their own ethnic/racial reference group (e.g., individual-orientation, group-orientation) and messages orienting the student to get along with other ethnic/racial groups (e.g., individual-orientation, group orientation). We also examined whether the quality of the student's relationships with members of their social support network was related to the type of ethnic/racial socialization messages they acknowledged and to a global sense of personal efficacy.

Racial/Ethnic Socialization Messages

The results of the study suggest that ethnic minority adolescents perceived their mothers emphasizing socialization messages in their parenting style and that adolescents acknowledged and understood the type of messages being conveyed, as found in other studies (Hughes & Chen, 1997, 1999). According to the review by Hughes et al. (2006), parents and youths most often mentioned the themes of cultural pride and ethnic pride in open-ended questions regarding ethnic socialization. These findings also add to the body of literature in support of the idea that mothers continue to be an ongoing source of support in evaluating race and ethnicity (Kerpelman et al., 2008). Among African-American and Latino youths, mothers were perceived as stressing pride in the reference group and wished their youngster to feel the same way. Since Caucasian mothers are members of the majority culture, it may be that these mothers felt less inclined to specifically discuss ethnicity or a cultural reference group. Although these Caucasian youths were less likely to receive cultural or ethnic messages, they were overwhelmingly more likely to receive messages promoting attitudes of tolerance and equality toward other groups, which is consistent with other studies (Katz & Kofkin, 1997).

A further investigation of African-American sub-sample of adolescents revealed interesting differences between youths who acknowledged receiving an ethnic socialization message, the type of message received, (i.e., individual orientation, group orientation, or no message), and the social support. Youths who perceived greater intimacy with their mothers were more likely to acknowledge an ethnic/racial

socialization message orienting them toward their individual accomplishments, instead of toward the larger ethnic/racial reference group. Youths who reported greater intimacy with their mothers, may also be more likely to spend greater time discussing more personal aspects of themselves which explains why more adolescents may have acknowledged receiving a message emphasizing individual orientation without reference to the larger ethnic/racial group. Again, a significant limitation of the study is the small number of youths indicating an individual orientation, which is not uncommon in studies examining ethnic socialization (Bowman & Howard, 1985). African-American adolescents who acknowledged their mothers imparting getting along messages that oriented them to treat others as individuals, independent of the ethnic or cultural reference group, was also correlated with higher appraisals of social support, specifically from fathers and teachers. Adolescents rated the quality of support from these sources higher in the domains of self-enhancing assistance, companionship, affection, and low conflict- discipline. It is unclear whether the socialization messages received from mothers about race-relations were most effectively reinforced by the quality of the mother-child relationship or simply reinforced in the youngster's social ecology.

Ethnic/Racial Socialization, Social Support, and Personal Efficacy

The final investigation of this study pertained to the relationship between the type of race-related socialization message, the quality of support from social network members, and personal efficacy among a sub-sample of African-American and Latino youth. The hypothesis that greater personal efficacy would be indicative of youths receiving greater race-related messages socializing them toward the ethnic group was found among the African-American subset but not confirmed among Latino participants. The lack of power associated with the Latino sample size may account for the lack of significant effects. In sum, African-American youths who perceived their mothers as reinforcing a strong orientation toward their ethnic/racial reference group were more likely to have a greater sense of personal efficacy than all other youths in the study, including other African-American youths who acknowledged being oriented toward individual achievement without reference to the greater ethnic/racial group. This suggests that a positive group identity may act to enhance a global sense of personal efficacy, which is consistent with early findings (Harrison et al., 1990; Tiejen, 1989) and more recent studies among rural African-American youths (Murry-McBride et al., 2009). Further, African-American youths who reported a greater degree of intimacy with their mothers were more likely to talk with their mothers about their cultural reference group. The findings among the African-American youths also echo the results of Bowman and Howard's (1985) original investigation between racial socialization and personal efficacy. However, unlike the Bowman and Howard study, the findings for the African-American youths in this study specify the type of message

related to efficacy; that is, socialization messages exerting racial pride and commitment were related to higher personal efficacy as opposed to the youths in Bowman and Howard's study who simply acknowledged receiving a race-related message without further investigating the type of message.

Limitations

This study failed to assess the racial or ethnic socialization characteristics among parents of the adolescents, which has been previously linked to the likelihood that children receive a message regarding their ethnicity (LaLonde, Jones, & Stroink, 2008). Family functioning may also play a role in whether or not parents impart messages upon their children about race as well as the nature of the message they pass on (Robbins et al., 2007). However, recent studies have failed to confirm that specific parental characteristics, such as education, actually influence the frequency or type of race-related socialization message (Huynh & Fuligni, 2008). Further, Bowman and Howard's (1985) original approach only focused on messages received from mothers, while failing to consider others involved in the youth's life who also may have provided similar messages (e.g., grandparents, teachers). Although mothers' influence has been most thoroughly investigated (Kerpelman, Eryigit, & Stephens, 2008), further examination is warranted on whether other social network members, such as educators, impart messages that supersede or merely complement those previously received.

It is clear from this study that there are many variables that can influence a general sense of efficacy and external control in the adolescent's life. Further studies should explore other variables that could potentially predict personal efficacy in Latino, African-American and Caucasian adolescents. Moreover, as adolescents begin to grow and develop, it becomes increasingly important to understand factors that hasten or hinder the healthy development of self-efficacy beliefs within the context of ethnic and cultural identity.

Conclusion

Racial identity is critical to the development of a healthy self concept as an adult (Ponterotto & Pederson, 1993) and most educators understand it is critical that students see their ethnic or racial reference group reflected in the school curriculum in order to foster self-efficacy and boost achievement (Gollnick, & Chinn, 2006). Among racial and ethnic adolescents, the development of personal efficacy may, in part, be associated with a greater understanding of their racial and ethnic identity as well as their orientation (collective or individualistic) to their racial or cultural reference group. Interestingly, within the small sample of African-American students, the quality of paternal and teacher support was related to the type of racial socialization messages youths reported, whether it was a positive group-oriented message or a message directing the student toward greater individualism. This variable was an indirect yet sufficiently effective means

of measuring the social ecology that also supports the youth's orientation toward their racial group as well as race relations with other groups. Therefore, as educational professionals and teachers interact with students in a multicultural learning environment, it is important to understand how students may perceive themselves in relation to their racial or ethnic reference group recognizing how this may influence their personal efficacy and the effect they have on their environment. Although the findings of our study suggest that racial socialization for students begins under the influence of the immediate family, educators also play a vital role as this process continues away from the home. Teachers have the opportunity to shape how their students view different racial and ethnic groups. When exposed to accurate information, students are less likely to accept and adopt negative stereotypes (Sue, 2003). The best way for teachers to impart racial awareness and combat negative preconceptions is to provide an environment in which students of various ethnic groups may interact with one another freely and without expectations (McLemore, & Romo, 1998). Being able to communicate with peers from various racial/ethnic backgrounds can heighten students' sense of social responsibility and human interdependence (Orfield, 2001). Due to linkages between a healthy self-concept and academic achievement (Caldwell, Zimmerman, Hilkene, Sellers & Notaro, 2002; Shelton & Sellers, 2000), further research should be conducted to understand how professionals in the education setting, such as educators and counselors, can acknowledge and support positive aspects of racial and ethnic socialization.

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Francesca M. Pernice-Duca, Ph.D. is an Assistant Professor at Wayne State University in the Department of Educational Psychology. Her research interests school and community mental health services research, and social support networks and mental health. She also teaches courses in the foundations of Educational Psychology for Teacher Education. E-mail: perniceduca@wayne.edu.

Delila Owens is an Assistant Professor in the Theoretical and Behavioral Foundations Division at Wayne State University. Her research interests include: urban education, factors that affect school counseling outcomes for African American children, development of girls of African descent and multicultural counseling. E-mail: owens@wayne.edu.