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How Discrimination Experiences Relate to Racial/ethnic Identity and Mental Health across First- and Second-Generation Vietnamese American Adolescents

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Abstract

Objectives: Racial/ethnic discrimination has been linked to behavioral and emotional problems in youth from marginalized groups. However, the psychological experience associated with discrimination may differ between immigrant and non-immigrant youth. Race-based discrimination may impact an adolescent's view of their own group (private regard) and/or their sense of how others view their group (public regard). Owing to differences in racialization, immigrant adolescents may be affected differently by experiences of discrimination than their U.S.-born peers. The current study examined whether nativity moderated the paths from racial/ethnic discrimination to private and public regard to mental health problems among Vietnamese American youth.

Method: Surveys were completed by 718 Vietnamese American 10th and 11th graders (M_{age} = 15.54 years, 61.4% female, 38.6% male). In this sample, 21.2% were first-generation (i.e., born outside of the U.S.) and 78.8% were second-generation (i.e., born in the U.S. with at least one parent born outside of the U.S.).

Results: Multigroup path analysis tested the direct and indirect effects of racial/ethnic discrimination on behavioral and emotional problems via private and public regard, and whether associations differed for first versus second-generation youth. Racial/ethnic discrimination was associated with lower public regard, but not private regard, for both first and second-generation Vietnamese American youth. Public regard was negatively associated with behavioral and emotional problems only among second-generation youth. No indirect effects were significant.

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Conclusions: Findings suggest differences in racialized experiences, as well as opportunities to support second-generation Vietnamese American and other marginalized youth from immigrant families from the mental health impacts of discrimination.

Keywords

racial/ethnic discrimination; mental health; collective racial/ethnic identity; Vietnamese American youth; nativity

Racial/ethnic discrimination – defined as biased actions by individuals and institutions against members of a marginalized racial/ethnic group – is a significant risk factor for mental health disorders (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2001). Contrary to the "model minority" myth, historical and present-day systemic and interpersonal discrimination against Asian Americans is well-documented (Gee et al., 2007; Lee & Ahn, 2011). Evidence indicates that experiences of racial/ethnic discrimination occur broadly, including in and outside of school contexts for Asian American youth (Koo et al., 2011; Rosenbloom & Way, 2004; Wang et al., 2011a). Indeed, Asian American students report more frequent experiences of racial/ethnic discrimination from peers compared to their Latinx, Black, and White peers (Cooc & Gee, 2014; Fisher et al., 2000; Huynh & Fuligni, 2010; Rivas-Drake et al., 2008; Rosenbloom & Way, 2004). Sociopolitical climate related to the global COVID-19 pandemic and escalating anti-immigrant rhetoric have resulted in recent increased bias, documented hate incidents, and discrimination against Asian Americans in general (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020; Chen et al., 2020a; Chen et al., 2020b), and Asian American youth in particular (Cheah et al., 2020).

Increased risk for racial/ethnic discrimination towards Asian American (or any) youth is important because it has been consistently linked to a wide range of mental health issues, including internalizing (e.g., anxiety, depression) and externalizing (e.g., aggression) problems (Benner et al., 2018; Benner & Kim, 2009; Wang & Atwal, 2015). Considering the potential risks conferred by rising overt anti-Asian sentiment (Chen et al., 2020; Hu et al., 2020), it is timely to study the paths through which race-based discrimination impacts mental health to identify potential areas for support.

Aspects of Racial/ethnic Identity as Potential Paths through the Discrimination–Distress Link

Although the link between racial/ethnic discrimination and poor mental health outcomes is well established, mediators or paths intervening in this relationship for youth are not well understood (Juang & Kiang, 2019; Neblett Jr. et al., 2012; Wang et al., 2011b). In her Model of Racism-Related Stress and Well-being, Harrell (2000) noted over twenty years ago that "we know too little about why some people are devastated psychologically (and otherwise) by racism while others fare a great deal better" (p. 48). Within a broad accounting of potential intervening factors, Harrell notes that psychological acculturation and racial/ethnic identity may shape the lens through which race-related experiences are interpreted, thereby determining well-being outcomes (Harrell, 2000). Indeed, aspects of collective racial/ethnic identity may be a particularly pertinent internal factor intervening

in this relationship (Cassidy et al., 2004). Racial/ethnic discrimination experiences may impact mental health via implications for self-evaluation of one's racial/ethnic identity, which according to Sellers and colleagues' Multidimensional Model of Racial Identity, is theorized to encompass both an assessment of (a) one's personal judgements of the value of their own racial/ethnic group (private regard), and (b) one's beliefs regarding how *others* outside their racial/ethnic group judge their racial/ethnic group (public regard; Sellers et al., 1997, 1998). Negative evaluations of either or both aspects of collective racial/ethnic identity may arise from discrimination experiences to impact adolescent mental health.

Adolescence is a critical period for self and identity development, often characterized by exploring the social groups to which one belongs (Kiang & Fuligni, 2009; Kiang et al., 2010). Understanding the mechanisms through which discrimination experiences impact well-being in adolescence can suggest strategies to mitigate negative consequences of these processes at an earlier stage in development (Lanier et al., 2017; Williams & Mohammed, 2013). Prevention or intervention strategies may differ if the primary focus is one's judgment of their own group or one's view of how others view their group. For example, implications for private regard as a focus may suggest the benefit of individual-level strategies, such as clinicians assisting youth to understand how judgments of their own group may be influenced and internalized through experiences of discrimination. On the other hand, public regard has been suggested to indicate a coping strategy wherein Asian Americans may be adaptively attributing discrimination experiences to negative outgroup beliefs, rather than devaluing one's own group (Liang & Fassinger, 2008). However, if such beliefs still contribute in pathways to poor well-being outcomes, macro-level interventions to combat xenophobia and racism are more likely to mitigate these links. Indeed, structural-level solutions are sorely needed to reduce experiences of interpersonal and systemic discrimination against Asian American youth that may have impacts on both their private and public regard.

Discrimination, Private Regard, and Mental Health Outcomes

Discrimination experiences may be internalized to affect one's private regard towards their group to negatively impact mental health outcomes (Rivas-Drake et al., 2014b). Discrimination was associated with lower private regard in Black, Dominican American, and Chinese American youth (Del Toro et al., 2020), as well as with lower ethnic-related affect in Chinese American adolescents (Hou et al., 2015). In turn, private regard was positively associated with higher self-esteem in Chinese American youth (Rivas-Drake et al., 2008), and greater levels of daily happiness in Mexican American and Chinese American adolescents (Kiang et al., 2006).

Research examining the indirect effect of racial/ethnic discrimination on well-being through private regard is limited and mixed. Liang and Fassinger (2008) did not find private regard to mediate the link between racism-related stress and self-esteem and interpersonal problems in Asian American college students; however, it is unclear whether findings extend to Asian American adolescents. In one study using an adolescent sample, private regard was found to mediate the relationship between ethnic discrimination and global self-worth in Turkish, Moroccan, Surinamese, and Dutch adolescents in the Netherlands (Verkuyten &

Thijs, 2006). Another study examining Chinese migrant adolescents who had moved to urban areas found that the relationship between discrimination and subjective well-being was partially mediated by a measure of collective migrant group identity that included private regard, public regard, and membership esteem (Jia et al., 2017). Mixed findings for the mediation may be attributed to differences in methods (e.g., measures of private regard, migrant group versus racial/ethnic identity), contexts (Netherlands, United States, China), samples (youth versus young adults), and outcomes examined (e.g., global self-worth versus subjective well-being). More research is needed to elucidate these pathways for mental health outcomes in Asian American youth specifically.

Discrimination, Public Regard, and Mental Health Outcomes

Discrimination may also impact well-being by negatively influencing Asian American adolescents' beliefs about how others view their racial/ethnic group. Discrimination from both peers and adults was associated with lower public regard in Black, Dominican American, and Chinese American youth (Del Toro et al., 2020). Another study found a negative association between discrimination and public regard in Black, Latinx, and White adolescents (Douglass & Umaña-Taylor, 2016). In turn, public regard was negatively associated with depressive symptoms among Chinese American youth (Rivas-Drake et al., 2008).

While Liang and Fassinger (2008) found that public regard partially mediated the relationship between racism-related stress and self-esteem and interpersonal problems in Asian American college students, it is again unclear if findings extend to Asian American adolescents given that adolescence may be a particularly critical period for racial/ethnic identity development, during which the effects of racism and discrimination may differ (Kiang et al., 2010). Jia et al. (2017) found that the link between discrimination and subjective well-being was partially mediated by a combined measure of collective migrant group identity that included public regard in Chinese migrant adolescents who had moved to urban areas. However, more research specifically for mental health outcomes with Asian American youth is needed given likely differences in marginalization that relate to identity development of Asian American youth in the United States compared to Chinese adolescents who have migrated from rural to urban areas in China.

Differences in Collective Racial/ethnic Identity across Groups

How different aspects of racial/ethnic identity relate to each other and to mental health may vary across racial and ethnic groups, with historical racialized experiences potentially driving differences. One influential study by Crocker and colleagues (1994) found that for Black college students, perceptions of low public regard for one's racial group were unrelated to their private regard, whereas these relations were relatively strong for Asian American college students. Public regard was not associated with mental health symptoms for Black students but was strongly related in a negative direction with depression and hopelessness for Asian American students. The authors concluded: "Black students seem to have learned to separate how they privately feel about their group from how they believe others evaluate them… adaptive in a group that has faced hundreds of years of prejudice and discrimination" (p. 510). In contrast, the majority of Asian Americans in this study

were immigrants, likely with relatively limited racial socialization experiences to insulate them from the negative effects of low perceived public regard of their group. Indeed, racial and ethnic identity development has been found to be generally beneficial for Black/African American adolescent psychosocial, academic, and health outcomes, whereas findings have been somewhat mixed for Latinx and Indigenous youth (Rivas-Drake et al., 2014a). Studies examining these relationships among Asian American and Pacific Islander adolescents are limited (Rivas-Drake et al., 2014a).

Vietnamese Americans are one understudied subgroup of Asian Americans with a complex immigration history potentially impacting their experiences of discrimination and mental health (Sangalang & Vang, 2017). Many Vietnamese Americans came to the United States as refugees following the Vietnam War, surviving socioeconomic hardships, wartime conflict, family loss and separation, and refugee trauma (Maffini & Pham, 2016; Nguyen et al., 2018). More recent immigration of Vietnamese Americans has occurred through family reunification programs (Alperin & Batalova, 2018). Vietnamese American adolescents today are primarily U.S.-born and either offspring of refugees (second-generation) or their descendants (e.g., third-generation), with a minority of Vietnamese Americans under 18 being themselves immigrants (first-generation; Alperin & Batalova, 2018). Given this unique immigration history and sociohistorical context, identity and mental health may be differently shaped by discrimination experiences across nativity groups for Vietnamese Americans compared to other racial/ethnic groups, including other Asian American subgroups. Vietnamese American adolescents represent an important group for study, both because of their potential need for support and because they provide an opportunity to assess the effects of nativity on the direct and indirect effects of racial/ethnic discrimination on mental health through perceived group status.

Nativity as a Moderator

Supporting Harrell (2000)'s contention that different person-environment transactions influence group experiences of racism, studies hint at potential differences in how discrimination, racial/ethnic identity, and well-being relate to each other in U.S.-born racial/ethnic marginalized youth compared to youth born in other countries who immigrate to the U.S. (Cheon & Yip, 2019; Yip, 2018; Woo et al., 2019). Some research suggests that U.S.-born racial/ethnic marginalized adolescents show stronger links between discrimination and depression than first-generation immigrant adolescents (Tummala-Narra & Claudius, 2013), owing perhaps to U.S.-born youth feeling a stronger connection to American identity (Schwartz et al., 2012) and thus greater awareness and sensitivity to issues of racial inequity (Wiley et al., 2008; Woo et al., 2019). Researchers have proposed that first-generation immigrants may be less attuned to societal racial hierarchies that disadvantage minoritized groups than U.S.-born youth, thereby potentially reducing the mental health effects of discrimination on this group (Perkins et al., 2014; Sidanius & Pratto, 2001 Tummala-Narra & Claudius, 2013). For instance, Ying et al. (2000) found that experiences of racial discrimination had a greater negative impact on sense of coherence for U.S.-born Chinese American college students than for their first-generation immigrant peers, though similar studies with Asian American youth are limited.

On the other hand, other research suggests that racial/ethnic discrimination may more greatly impact first-generation immigrant adolescents than U.S.-born adolescents, perhaps due in part to a higher connection to one's heritage culture. While findings examining this relationship by nativity status in youth are limited (Benner et al., 2018; Yip et al., 2019), findings from the adult literature may provide some support for this hypothesis. Racism-related stress was positively associated with mental health difficulties in first-generation immigrant but not U.S.-born Asian American adults (Miller et al., 2011), whereas experiences of racism were related to decreases in the academic performance of first-generation Asian American college students only (Yoo & Castro, 2011). Taken together, studies suggest a potential moderating role of nativity on the relationship between discrimination and mental health through aspects of racial/ethnic identity, though findings are mixed and understudied for mental health outcomes in youth specifically.

Finally, exploring these pathways may elucidate potential mechanisms contributing to findings related to the "immigrant paradox" in which those who immigrate to the U.S. are less likely to report externalizing and internalizing problems, and more likely to report better mental health outcomes overall than later generations (Marks et al., 2014; Salas-Wright et al., 2016).

The Current Study

To address gaps in research that have yet to clarify private and public regard paths from discrimination to mental health outcomes specifically for Vietnamese American youth, the present study examined nativity-based differences in how racial/ethnic discrimination is associated with behavioral and emotional problems via private and public regard components of racial/ethnic identity in Vietnamese American youth. Given mixed findings for these relationships, limited research for mental health outcomes in Vietnamese American youth specifically, and differential findings for the moderating role of nativity, we approached the analyses in an exploratory manner. We employed a multigroup path analysis, depicted in Figure 1, to examine associations between racial/ethnic discrimination and behavioral and emotional problems directly and indirectly through private and public regard, and whether associations differed across first and second-generation youth.

Method

Participants

The present sample was drawn from a larger study examining cultural variations in response to stress and mental health among European American and Vietnamese American 10th and 11th graders (Lau et al., 2016). The current study used data collected from the baseline survey, consisting of 718 Vietnamese American adolescents (M_{age} = 15.54 years, SD = 0.59; 61.4% female, 38.6% male). Among these youth, 21.2% were first-generation (born outside of the U.S.) and 78.8% were second-generation (born in the U.S. with at least one parent born outside of the U.S.). Eight students were third-generation (born in the U.S. with both parents born in the U.S.), but were excluded from the model due to the small comparative sample size. Participants reported on each of their parents' occupational status and number

of family members in the household. The median occupational status across parents was full-time. See Table 1 for descriptives of the sample.

Procedure

Participants were students recruited in three cohorts from 10 public high schools in southern California with significant proportions of Vietnamese American and European American students (Lau et al., 2016). Research staff and teachers made announcements describing the study in 10th and 11th grade Social Studies and Science classes, and then distributed consent packets to students. Students were provided small incentives (pens) for returning consent packets regardless of their decision to participate, as well as larger incentives (pizza party) for the first two classes to return all consent packets. Overall, 5,035 consent packets were returned, with 2,202 (43.7%) students who assented with parent consent and were eligible for study participation. Students met inclusion criteria for the larger study if they were (a) in 10^{th} or 11^{th} grade and (b) identified as Vietnamese American or European American. Among those that provided consent and were eligible, a stratified random sample was selected and administered an online survey at their respective schools' computer labs. Students received a $20 retail gift card for participation. Our final analytic sample for the present study included 718 Vietnamese American adolescents who completed all measures. All procedures were approved by the Institutional Review Boards at the University of California, Los Angeles and Vanderbilt University.

Measures

Racial/ethnic Discrimination—Racial/ethnic discrimination was assessed with the Discrimination subscale of the Adolescent Life Events Questionnaire (ALEQ; Hankin & Abramson, 2002). The ALEQ Discrimination subscale is an 8-item scale assessing adolescents' experiences with racial and ethnic discrimination (e.g., "You got picked on or threatened by another student because of your race or ethnicity"). Participants were asked to rate whether the event had occurred to them in the last three months on a "Yes" or "No" scale. A discrimination total score was calculated by summing the "Yes" responses.

Collective Self-Esteem Scale (Private and Public Regard)—Participants completed the Collective Self-Esteem Scale (CSE; Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992), which includes Private CSE and Public CSE subscales to assess individual differences in their private and public regard related to their racial/ethnic group. The 4-item *Private CSE* subscale assessed participants' personal judgments of how good their racial/ethnic groups are on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*), with items such as "I feel good about the race/ethnicity I belong to." Scores were averaged across items to produce a mean private CSE score for each participant. The *Private CSE* subscale had acceptable internal consistency in our study sample (α = .78).

The 4-item *Public CSE* subscale assessed participants' perceptions of outgroup evaluation of their racial/ethnic group on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*), with items such as "Overall, my racial/ethnic group is considered good by others." Scores were averaged across items to produce a mean public CSE score for each participant. The *Public CSE* subscale had acceptable internal consistency in our study sample (α = .70).

Behavioral and Emotional Problems—The 112-item Youth Self Report (YSR; Achenbach & Rescorla, 2001) assesses a broad range of behavioral and emotional problems. Adolescents rated each item on a 3-point Likert scale (0 = *not true*, 1 = *somewhat or sometimes true*, 2 = *very true or often true*) for their functioning over the past three months. The YSR is scored by taking the sum of all individual item responses, with a higher score indicating higher problem levels. The YSR produces a number of subscales: Anxious/Depressed, Withdrawn/Depressed, Somatic Complaints, Social Problems, Thought Problems, Attention Problems, Rule-Breaking Behavior and Aggressive Behavior. For the current study, we generated the T-score for the Total Problems scale to indicate overall behavioral and emotional functioning. The YSR had strong internal consistency in our study sample (α = .93).

Analytic Plan

Descriptive analyses and bivariate correlations were conducted in SPSS Version 27 to describe the demographics of the sample. The goals of the primary analyses were to assess (a) associations between racial/ethnic discrimination and behavioral and emotional problems directly and indirectly through private and public regard, and (b) whether these paths differed by nativity. A multigroup path analysis was conducted in Mplus Version 8.6 (Muthén & Muthén, 1998–2017) to test these associations, with nativity as the grouping variable. Model fit was assessed via four fit indices: Pearson's chi-square (non-significant χ^2), the comparative fit index (CFI > .95), the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA < .06), and the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR < .08; Hu & Bentler, 1999). Because the endogenous private and public regard variables were correlated with each other (see Table 2) and derived from the same measure, their residuals were correlated in the model, which is appropriate when there is theoretical justification (Cole et al., 2007).

The multigroup path analysis consisted of two steps. First, we compared an unconstrained multigroup model, in which all paths were allowed to vary across groups, to a constrained model, in which all paths were constrained to be equal across groups, using a chi-square difference test to assess for model invariance. Second, we sequentially constrained primary paths of interest to identify what specific direct and indirect paths differed for first and second generation Vietnamese American youth in a "backward search" (Chou & Bentler, 2002). Wald chi-square tests of parameter constraints and chi-square difference tests were used to determine whether parameter estimates differed across groups, with a significant test indicating difference by nativity (Chou & Bentler, 2002). Age, gender, average parent occupational status, and number of family members in the household were included as control variables in the models. We used full information maximum likelihood (FIML) to handle missing data in our variables (ranging from 0% to 3.9% missingness), which provides unbiased estimates under ignorable missing data conditions (Enders, 2001).

Results

Bivariate correlations of study variables are reported in Table 2 for the full sample and by nativity. Private and public CSE were not significantly correlated with racial/ethnic

discrimination and behavioral and emotional problems when looking only at first-generation Vietnamese American youth, though they were correlated with each other ($r = .44$, $p < .001$). In contrast, private and public CSE were both correlated with behavioral and emotional problems ($r = -.15$, $p < .001$; $r = -.18$, $p < .001$), as well as with each other ($r = .54$, $p < .001$) in second-generation Vietnamese American youth. Public CSE was also correlated with racial/ethnic discrimination for second-generation youth ($r = -.13$, $p = .002$). Racial/ethnic discrimination was correlated with behavioral and emotional problems in both first-generation ($r = .23$, $p = .004$) and second-generation Vietnamese American youth ($r = .17$, $p < .001$).

T-tests were conducted to examine mean differences by nativity for all study variables. Means for racial/ethnic discrimination, $t(711) = -0.18$, $p = .86$; private CSE, $t(703) = 0.45$, $p = .66$; and public CSE, $t(703) = -1.85$, $p = .06$, did not significantly differ between first- and second-generation Vietnamese American adolescents. However, second-generation Vietnamese American youth reported significantly more behavioral and emotional problems on the YSR T-score for Total Problems ($M = 60.31$, $SD = 9.13$) than did first-generation youth ($M = 57.24$, $SD = 10.08$), $t(709) = -3.57$, $p < .001$.

Multigroup Path Analysis

Direct Effects—Model fit indices suggested that the unconstrained model was a better fit for the data after private and public regard were correlated in the model ($\chi^2[7] = 7.12$, $p = .42$; CFI = 1.00; RMSEA = .007; SRMR = .02), compared to the fully constrained model ($\chi^2[25] = 43.66$, $p = .01$; CFI = .93; RMSEA = .05; SRMR = .04). A chi-square difference test suggested that the unconstrained model significantly improved the fit of the model ($\Delta\chi^2[18] = 36.54$, $p < .05$), indicating that at least one parameter estimate was different across groups.

Sequentially constraining model parameters of interest revealed that only one of the main paths of interest in the model from public CSE to YSR Total differed across groups (Wald test: $\chi^2[1] = 4.93$, $p = .03$). The chi-square difference test showed significantly worsened model fit when this path was constrained to equality when compared to the unconstrained model ($\Delta\chi^2[1] = 4.71$, $p < .05$). Thus, this path was allowed to vary freely in the model whereas the rest of the paths in the model were constrained to be equal across groups. Fit indices of this final model were acceptable ($\chi^2[24] = 37.98$, $p = .03$; CFI = .95; RMSEA = .04; SRMR = .04).

Results for the final model are depicted in Figure 1 and summarized in Table 3. Across first and second-generation Vietnamese American youth, racial/ethnic discrimination was not associated with Private CSE ($B = -0.05$, $SE = 0.04$, $p = .17$, 95% CI [−0.13, 0.02]), but was negatively associated with Public CSE ($B = -0.12$, $SE = 0.04$, $p = .001$, 95% CI [−0.19, −0.05]) and positively associated with behavioral and emotional problems ($B = 1.92$, $SE = 0.42$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [1.10, 2.74]). Private CSE was not associated with behavioral and emotional problems ($B = -0.86$, $SE = 0.46$, $p = .06$, 95% CI [−1.76, 0.04]). While Public CSE was not associated with behavioral and emotional problems for first-generation Vietnamese American youth ($B = 1.42$, $SE = 1.03$, $p = .17$, 95% CI [−0.61, 3.44]), it was negatively associated with behavioral and emotional problems for second-generation

Vietnamese American youth ($B = -1.26$, $SE = 0.55$, $p = .02$, 95% CI [−2.33, −0.19]). Results suggest that racial/ethnic discrimination was associated with lower Public CSE in both first and second generation Vietnamese American youth, but Public CSE was only associated with behavioral and emotional problems in second-generation youth, such that higher Public CSE was related to lower behavioral and emotional problems.

Indirect Effects—The indirect effect of racial/ethnic discrimination on behavioral and emotional problems through Private CSE was not significant among first-generation youth (point estimate = 0.04, $SE = 0.09$, $p = .67$, 95% CI [−0.14, 0.22]) or second-generation youth (point estimate = 0.05, $SE = 0.05$, $p = .31$, 95% CI [−0.04, 0.14]). The indirect effect through Public CSE was also not significant for either first-generation (point estimate = −0.19, $SE = 0.20$, $p = .34$, 95% CI [−0.58, 0.20]) or second-generation youth (point estimate = 0.15, $SE = 0.08$, $p = .068$, 95% CI [−0.01, 0.31]). Neither were the indirect effects significantly different across groups.

Discussion

Given growing concerns of overt anti-Asian sentiment (Gover et al., 2020; Misra et al., 2020), the current study is timely in expanding our understanding of paths from racial/ethnic discrimination to behavioral and emotional problems in immigrant and U.S.-born Vietnamese American youth. The associations between racial/ethnic discrimination and private regard, public regard, and behavioral and emotional problems did not significantly differ by nativity. Racial/ethnic discrimination was related to lower public regard and higher behavioral and emotional problems, but was not related to private regard, across both groups. Furthermore, private regard was unrelated to behavioral and emotional problems for both groups. However, there was a significant difference across groups in which higher public regard related to fewer behavioral and emotional problems in second-generation, but not first-generation Vietnamese American adolescents. Findings lent some support for the Model of Racism-Related Stress and Well-being (Harrell, 2000), given that racial/ethnic discrimination was differently related to aspects of collective racial/ethnic identity (i.e., public not private regard), while public regard was related to well-being for second-generation Vietnamese American youth only. However, indirect effects were not significant, which departed from the model prediction that racial/ethnic identity would mediate the relationship between discrimination and well-being.

Results from the present study were consistent with previous studies conducted with Asian American adolescents that found racial/ethnic discrimination to be associated with lower public regard in Chinese American, Black, and Dominican American youth of both nativity groups (i.e., born in the U.S., born outside of the U.S.; Del Toro et al., 2020), and higher public regard in turn to be associated with lower depressive symptoms in Chinese American youth who were primarily children of immigrants (Rivas-Drake et al., 2008). Our findings build on these studies by extending the outcomes to Vietnamese American youth specifically, and by demonstrating that the relationship between higher public regard and lower behavioral and emotional problems occurred for second-generation but not first-generation Vietnamese American youth whereas the prior studies did not explore differences by nativity. One possible explanation for this finding is that different

racialization experiences of U.S.-born Vietnamese Americans, who may feel greater connection to American identity compared to first-generation immigrants (Schwartz et al., 2012) results in greater likelihood of being affected by outgroup perceptions of their racial/ethnic group (Tummala-Narra & Claudius, 2013; Yoo & Lee, 2008). Given that U.S.-born second-generation Vietnamese American youth in the current study reported higher behavioral and emotional problems than their first-generation immigrant peers, findings are also consistent with prior studies on the "immigrant paradox" (Marks et al., 2014).

However, results from the present study were somewhat inconsistent with a previous study conducted with Asian American college students of various generational statuses (i.e., first, second, and 1.5 generation) that found that public regard, but not private regard, mediated the relationship between racism-related stress and psychosocial outcomes, specifically self-esteem and interpersonal problems (Liang & Fassinger, 2008). In the current study, neither private regard nor public regard, which had only a marginally significant indirect effect for second-generation Vietnamese American youth, mediated the relationship between racial/ethnic discrimination and behavioral and emotional problems (Liang & Fassinger, 2008). Inconsistent findings may be due to focus on different outcomes (e.g., self-esteem and interpersonal problems versus mental health outcomes), which may be differently impacted by mediating processes for youth specifically. It is possible that self-esteem and interpersonal problems are more proximal outcomes of negative perceptions of public regard; thus, discrimination may be related to these more proximal outcomes through public regard, but not necessarily to mental health outcomes through public regard in the current study.

In contrast, although discrimination experiences were similarly linked to lower public regard among first-generation immigrant youth, their perceptions of outgroup evaluations were not linked to mental health problems. It has been suggested that first-generation immigrants may maintain greater positive identification and connection with their heritage culture and are less likely to identify as being American, which may render them less likely to be affected by outgroup perceptions of their racial/ethnic group (Perkins et al., 2014; Rivas-Drake et al., 2008; Sorrell et al., 2019). This greater enculturation or racial/ethnic group identification in adolescents may confer protective benefits against discrimination (Juang & Kiang, 2019; Park et al., 2017; Romero et al., 2013; Tummala-Narra & Claudius, 2013; Umaña-Taylor & Updegraff, 2007), whereas U.S.-born racial/ethnic marginalized youth who feel a claim to American identity may be more vulnerable to recognition of marginalization (Nguyen, 2006; Rivas-Drake et al., 2008). Indeed, one study found that endorsement of American identity exacerbated the association between discrimination and antisocial behaviors in both U.S.- and foreign-born East and South Asian American college students (Park et al., 2013).

Overall, it is likely that the moderating role of racial/ethnic identity on the relationship between discrimination and mental health varies by racial/ethnic group, nativity, and level and stage of racial/ethnic identity development (Mirpuri et al., 2019; Woo et al. 2019; Yip, 2018). Additional research is warranted to more explicitly examine youths' responses to negative outgroup perceptions of their racial/ethnic groups and how responses may differ across immigrant generations endorsing different degrees of racial/ethnic identity. For example, qualitative or mixed methods research might evaluate how Vietnamese American

and other racial/ethnic marginalized youth conceptualize or cope with discrimination experiences across immigrant generations, and what responses may buffer against their detrimental impacts.

Another notable finding was that experiences of racial/ethnic discrimination were not associated with private regard for either group, nor was private regard related to mental health outcomes in our sample. Researchers have speculated that in situations where dominant outgroup evaluations are negative, immigrants and their descendants may discount and externalize marginalization experiences to protect their group esteem (Deaux et al., 2007; Liang & Fassinger, 2008; Perkins et al., 2014). By externalizing discrimination experiences as a result of societal injustice, Asian Americans can be inoculated from internalizing racism or devaluing their own group. Vietnamese American youth in the current study may have learned to separate the negative appraisals of others from their own valuation of their racial/ethnic group.

Yet, framing discrimination as resulting from negative appraisal from a dominant outgroup may have its own set of consequences for well-being (Liang & Fassinger, 2008). Our findings point to the importance of buffering youth from perceptions of outgroups' negative evaluations of their racial/ethnic group. In our study, first-generation Vietnamese American youth did not evince a relationship between their perceptions of negative outgroup views and mental health. In contrast, U.S.-born second-generation Vietnamese American adolescents reported findings that mental health outcomes were related to public regard.

Overall, findings have potential implications for intervention. Racial/ethnic discrimination was associated with behavioral and emotional problems in both groups, whereas only U.S.-born second-generation Vietnamese American youth evinced a link between public regard and behavioral and emotional problems. Educators could consider interventions that promote collective action and/or a sense of coalition across minoritized groups of youth to help youth counter negative racial/ethnic bias and stereotypes and boost perceptions of public regard among outgroups, especially for second-generation youth. Collective action has been described as "an active form of community participation through which a member of a group acts as a representative of that group to promote its social conditions" (Breslow et al., 2015, p. 255). Collective action promotes personal agency as a proactive form of coping and may attenuate the effects of minority stress (Friedman & Leaper, 2010). Most support for this assertion is based on research with sexual and gender minority individuals and has confirmed that engaging in collective action can buffer negative effects of heterosexism (DeBlaere et al., 2014; Velez & Moradi, 2016). Emerging data suggests that activism among racial/ethnic marginalized youth can provide protection from distress associated with discrimination experiences (Hope et al., 2018). Interventions that highlight shared experiences of discrimination among marginalized groups can promote intergroup relations and a sense of coalition (Cortland et al., 2017; Craig & Richeson, 2012). The introduction of ethnic studies can promote these concepts through curriculum in secondary education settings. Furthermore, future research must also examine broader, macro-level efforts to shift public views away from negative anti-Asian biases, such that the burden to manage negative effects of racial/ethnic discrimination does not fall solely on the individual. Suggestions have included reducing misleading media coverage and xenophobic rhetoric

or implementing positive mass media campaigns to challenge stereotypes and decrease prejudice (Clement et al., 2012; Misra et al., 2020).

There are several study limitations that should be considered when interpreting these results. First, although our study sheds insights on one understudied Asian American subgroup, findings may not generalize to other marginalized racial/ethnic groups, including other Asian American ethnic groups. More work is needed to explore these relationships in other groups. Second, although constructs assessed in the study such as experiences of racial/ethnic discrimination and private and public regard may be best assessed with self-report, reliance on self-report data may have resulted in third variable influence on relations among our constructs. Additionally, adolescents self-identified as Vietnamese American to be eligible for the study. As such, the sample also included adolescents of multiracial Vietnamese and additional race/ethnicity. Third, our study's use of a cross-sectional design was not able to provide for causality and directionality of the relationships found. Fourth, the sample sizes for first-generation (n = 152) and second-generation (n = 566) youth in the current study were unequal. Prior research suggests that unequal sample sizes across categorical moderators decreases power for detecting interactions, thereby potentially underestimating moderating effects (Aguinis et al., 2017; Ro, 2012). Relatedly, prior research suggests meaningful differences in well-being outcomes linked to age at immigration, such as for 1.5-generation immigrants (i.e., those who immigrate during childhood; Leong et al., 2013). Due to the distribution of the current sample where immigrant youth already comprised a comparatively small proportion, we were unable to test these differences. Future research should explore whether findings differ when further disaggregating generational status. Fifth, first- and second-generation immigrants may have two potential sources of public regard to consider when asked about how "others" evaluate their racial/ethnic group on a public regard measure: 1) members of the majority group in the country where they are currently residing, or 2) members of their heritage culture residing in their or their parents' country of origin (Perkins et al., 2014). The current study did not distinguish between these two potential sources of public regard. Finally, we opted in the current study to examine behavioral and emotional problems together, given prior findings that racial/ethnic discrimination relates to both behavioral and emotional problems and better model fit indices when using the YSR Total Score. However, prior studies in the adolescent literature have examined internalizing and externalizing problems as separate outcomes (Benner et al., 2018), and it is possible that paths from racial/ethnic discrimination through private and public regard may relate to externalizing and internalizing problems separately. Thus, future studies may want to treat these as distinct outcomes.

Despite these limitations, the current study suggests that public regard may function differently in terms of how it relates to mental health outcomes for U.S.-born second-generation Vietnamese American youth compared to first-generation immigrant youth, and perhaps with other groups with similar histories. Given that adolescence is a period of risk for developing behavioral and emotional problems, it is important to engage in protective strategies for buffering such risks. Knowledge regarding who is at highest risk and why can increase the efficiency of our efforts in this area.

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Public Significance:

This study suggests that experiences of racial/ethnic discrimination negatively affect how Vietnamese American youth believe the public views their group, but not how they view their own group. Second-generation Vietnamese American youth may experience impacts on behavioral and emotional problems as a result. Educational practices and policies can attend to the needs of youth from marginalized groups encountering group-based discrimination.

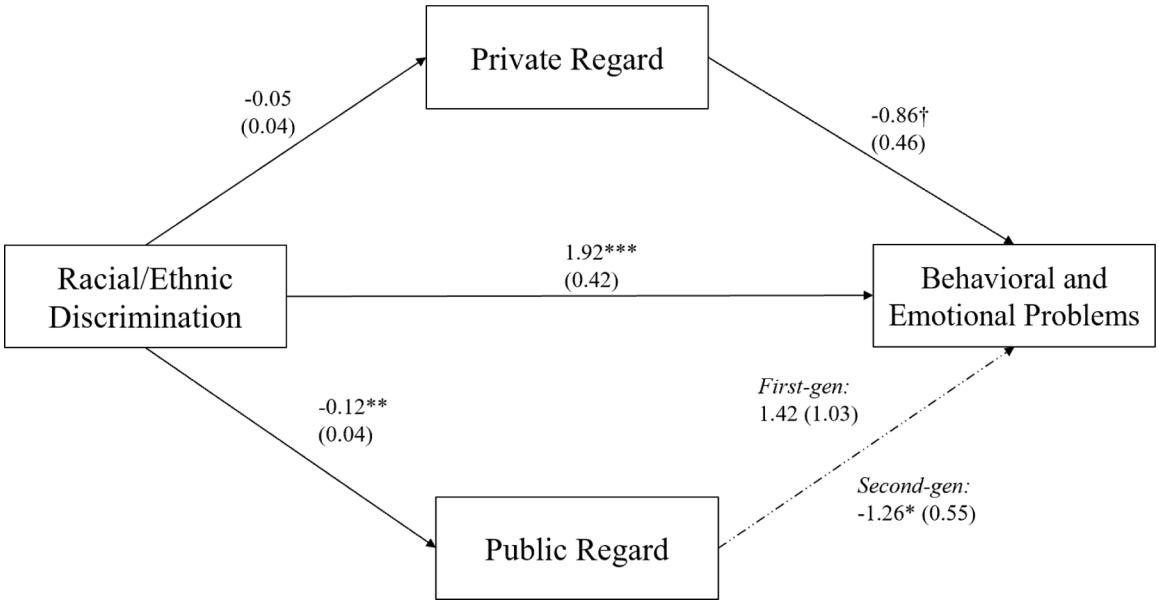

Figure 1.

Final multigroup path model. Coefficients represent unstandardized regression weights and the numbers in parentheses represent standard deviations. All paths were constrained to be equal across groups except the path delineated with a dotted arrow, which was significant for second-generation Vietnamese American youth only. The model also controlled for age, gender, average parent occupational status, and number of family members in the household. Control variables and correlation between error terms for private and public regard not pictured for clarity. † $p < .10$, *$p < .05$, **$p < .01$, ***$p < .001$

Table 1

Descriptives of study variables by nativity

	First-generation (*n* = 152)	Second- generation (*n* = 566)	Total (*n* = 718)
Racial/ethnic discrimination, *M (SD)*	0.32 (0.72)	0.33 (0.88)	0.33 (0.85)
Private regard, *M (SD)*	5.36 (0.87)	5.33 (0.87)	5.33 (0.87)
Public regard, *M (SD)*	4.94 (0.79)	5.07 (0.80)	5.04 (0.80)
Behavioral and emotional problems, *M(SD)*	57.24 (10.08)	60.31 (9.13)	59.67 (9.41)
Age, *M (SD)*	15.58 (0.59)	15.53 (0.58)	15.54 (0.59)
Gender, *n* (%)			
Female	94 (61.8)	347 (61.3%)	441 (61.4)
Male	58 (38.2)	219 (38.7%)	277 (38.6)
Nativity, *n* (%)			
Immigrant born outside the U.S.	--	--	152 (21.2)
U.S.-born	--	--	566 (78.8)
Mother occupation level, *n* (%)			
Full-time	66 (43.4)	312 (55.1)	378 (52.6)
Part-time	31 (20.4)	79 (14.0)	110 (15.3)
Unemployed and searching	14 (9.2)	37 (6.5)	51 (7.1)
Unemployed and not searching	19 (12.5)	92 (16.3)	111 (15.5)
Retired	1 (0.7)	3 (0.5)	4 (0.6)
Don’t know/Not applicable	21 (13.8)	43 (7.6)	64 (8.9)
Father occupation level, *n* (%)			
Full-time	81 (53.3)	348 (61.5)	429 (59.7)
Part-time	16 (10.5)	44 (7.8)	60 (8.4)
Unemployed and searching	20 (13.2)	35 (6.2)	55 (7.7)
Unemployed and not searching	9 (5.9)	21 (3.7)	30 (4.2)
Retired	1 (0.7)	22 (3.9)	23 (3.2)
Don’t know/Not applicable	25 (16.4)	96 (17.0)	121 (16.9)
Average parent occupation level, *M (SD)*	1.80 (0.79)	1.71 (0.86)	1.73 (0.85)
Number of family members in the household, *M (SD)*	3.82 (1.78)	4.10 (1.84)	4.04 (1.83)

Table 2

Bivariate correlations between study variables in the full sample and by nativity

Full Sample (*n* = 718)	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**
1. Racial/ethnic discrimination	--							
2. Private regard	−.05	--						
3. Public regard	−.12**	.52***	--					
4. Behavioral and emotional problems	.18***	−.13***	−.12**	--				
5. Age	−.01	−.06	−.10**	.06	--			
6. Gender	−.06	−.02	.001	.04	−.06	--		
7. Average parent occupational status	.01	−.01	.01	.04	.01	−.03	--	
8. Number of people in the household	−.01	.01	−.002	.03	.01	.01	.002	--
First-generation (Immigrant, *n* = 152)	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**
1. Racial/ethnic discrimination	--							
2. Private regard	−.06	--						
3. Public regard	−.06	.44***	--					
4. Behavioral and emotional problems	.23**	−.03	.07	--				
5. Age	.07	−.12	−.07	.004	--			
6. Gender	−.13	.12	.08	.22**	.06	--		
7. Average parent occupational status	−.11	−.06	−.06	.14	−.05	.04	--	
8. Number of people in the household	.02	−.08	−.13	.06	.08	−.01	−.01	--
Second-generation (U.S.-born, *n* = 566)	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**
1. Racial/ethnic discrimination	--							
2. Private regard	−.05	--						
3. Public regard	−.13**	.54***	--					
4. Behavioral and emotional problems	.17***	−.15***	−.18***	--				
5. Age	−.03	−.05	−.11**	.08	--			
6. Gender	−.05	−.06	−.02	−.01	−.09*	--		
7. Average parent occupational status	.04	.003	.02	.02	.03	−.05	--	
8. Number of people in the household	−.02	.04	.02	.01	−.003	.01	.01	--

* $p < .05$

** $p < .01$

*** $p < .001$

Table 3

Final multigroup path analysis results

Variables	Coefficient	*SE*	95% CI	*p*
Private Regard				
Racial/ethnic discrimination	−0.05	0.04	[−0.13, 0.02]	.17
Age	−0.09†	0.06	[−0.20, 0.02]	.099
Gender	−0.05	0.07	[−0.18, 0.08]	.44
Average parent occupational status	−0.01	0.04	[−0.09, 0.07]	.79
Family members in household	0.01	0.02	[−0.03, 0.04]	.71
Public Regard				
Racial/ethnic discrimination	−0.12**	0.04	[−0.19, −0.05]	.001
Age	−0.15**	0.05	[−0.25, −0.05]	.004
Gender	−0.02	0.06	[−0.14, 0.10]	.76
Average parent occupational status	0.01	0.04	[−0.07, 0.08]	.90
Family members in household	0.00	0.02	[−0.03, 0.03]	.98
Behavioral and Emotional Problems				
Racial/ethnic discrimination	1.92***	0.42	[1.10, 2.74]	<.001
Private regard	−0.86†	0.46	[−1.76, 0.04]	.06
Public regard (First-generation)	1.42	1.03	[−0.61, 3.44]	.17
Public regard (Second-generation)	−1.26*	0.55	[−2.33, −0.19]	.02
Age	0.91	0.58	[−0.23, 2.06]	.12
Gender	0.76	0.70	[−0.62, 2.14]	.28
Average parent occupational status	0.51	0.41	[−0.29, 1.30]	.21
Family members in household	0.13	0.19	[−0.23, 0.50]	.47
Indirect Effects	**Estimate**	***SE***	**95% CI**	***p***
Private regard				
First-generation	0.04	0.09	[−0.14, 0.22]	.67
Second-generation	0.05	0.05	[−0.04, 0.14]	.31
Public regard				
First-generation	−0.19	0.20	[−0.58, 0.20]	.34
Second-generation	0.15†	0.08	[−0.01, 0.31]	.068

† $p < .10$

* $p < .05$

** $p < .01$

*** $p < .001$