

The Impact of Ethnic Socialization on Juvenile Delinquency

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Abstract

The ethnic socialization processes for children are specifically tailored and unique to African American and Latino(a) children within the same household experiencing the same racial barriers messages and dynamics. Lower social economic status and the inability or inadequacies to obtain adequate counseling and/or opportunities to foster a positive outcome, could inadvertently lead to delinquency. The deficiency in the development of generalized social reinforcers may exacerbate the propensity for delinquency and lead a child to ingress into adult criminality. Racial/Ethnic socialization is a way of referring to the process of parents or other significant caregivers communicating messages about race and ethnicity to their children. Without generalized social reinforcers from parents and family, and without generalization of these reinforcers to other adult representatives of society, socialization is likely to be underdeveloped and delinquency is likely to occur. The main purpose of this study is to explore the effectiveness of generalized social reinforcers to understand delinquency in terms of sociocultural, emotional, and psychological context. These constructs may emphasize the influence of the social environment and the interpersonal relationships that develop within the social environment on outcomes for children.

Keywords: Racial/ethnic Socialization, delinquency, social reinforcers, theory, and research.

1.0. Introduction

A striking feature of the behavior of chronic delinquents is their apparent lack of responsiveness to interpersonal or social stimuli, especially where adults are concerned. Socialization processes that are flawed or inadequate in meeting a child's needs could limit the child's sense of attachment and commitment, which is vital in solidifying relationships with family members and traditional role models (Ryan et al., 2008b). According to Bigler and Suizzo (2012), the family plays an important role in the overall socialization of their children. Racial/Ethnic socialization refers to the process of transmitting messages about race and ethnicity by parents or other significant caregivers, and has been identified as a vital component of the socialization process. Studies have found relationships between ethnic socialization, academic attainment, self-esteem, prosocial attitudes and behavior, and feelings of efficacy regarding school performance (Thomas, & Blackmon, 2015; Tyler, Fagan, & Geller, 2014).

The literature to date has failed to provide an understanding of the socialization process itself. Primarily conceptualized as a buffer to racial oppression (Underhill, 2018), it has been viewed as a protective and reactionary response of some minority parents to racial barriers and discrimination. Research in this area has sought to demonstrate racial/ethnic socialization's direct effects on racial and ethnic identity as well as its effects on academic achievement and prosocial behaviors (Thomas, & Blackmon, 2015). While research to date has demonstrated racial/ethnic socialization's buffering effects on the aforementioned variables, historically the literature has not operationalized it as a process variable, thereby making the research to date inconclusive (Hall, Hall, & Perry, 2016; Najdowski, Bottoms, & Goff, 2015).

Vittrup (2018) defined ethnic socialization as the process of transmitting messages and behaviors to children to forge their sense of identity. Furthermore, Wolfe, McLean, and Pratt (2017) identified two types of socialization practices, which include proactive and protective messages. Proactive messages are said to focus primarily on cultural empowerment and might include messages that focus on instilling pride in one's ethnic group. Protective messages focus on societal oppression and might include barrier messages. Racial/Ethnic socialization is a way of referring to the process of parents or other significant caregivers communicating messages about race and ethnicity to their children (Ross, 2015; Seaton, Upton, Gilbert, Volpe, 2014).

The relevant literature typically uses racial and ethnic socialization to refer to the same process. Nonetheless, race typically refers to a group of people distinguished by genetically transmitted physical characteristics and is applied to biological groupings, whereas ethnicity is usually applied to cultural groupings. Although race was originally used as a biological taxonomy to classify plants and animals, when applied to humans it refers to shared genetic heritage based upon external physical characteristics such as facial features, skin color, and hair texture (Ross, 2015). This method of classification has been controversial. Vittrup (2018) indicated that racial classification provides little information and is only useful to the degree that it contributes to evolutionary theory.

The present study makes a significant contribution to the existing body of research on racial/ethnic socialization by exploring the mechanisms that parents use to socialize their children. In fact, the present study differs from previous research, which has largely ignored the process of socialization and has instead examined racial/ethnic attitudes of parents and/or children (Bigler & Suizzo, 2012). It is hoped that an exploration of the socialization process will aid in our understanding of this phenomenon in addition to helping to identify its buffering effects more clearly as a component of potentially effective parenting strategies. Informed by the literature, the second major objective of this study is to examine the correlates of racial/ethnic socialization. It should be noted, that while relationships have been found between racial/ethnic socialization, academic achievement, and behavioral outcomes, previous research utilized attitudinal measures when demonstrating such relationships. As such, the literature has not demonstrated a relationship between the racial/ethnic socialization process and its possible correlates (Stevenson, & Arrington, 2009; Zucker, & Patterson, 2018).

2.0. Literature Review

Upon an extensive review of the relevant literature a lacuna emerged regarding the impact of ethnic socialization on delinquency of minority youth, specifically the protective effects of racial/ethnic socialization. Thomas, and Blackmon (2015) suggested that racial/ethnic socialization acts as a buffer and may insulate children against negative messages they might receive from the larger society and may in fact help them develop additional competencies. Most of the research with respect to racial/ethnic socialization has focused on its relationship to ethnic identity development. There is some evidence that racial/ethnic socialization positively influences ethnic identity (Seaton, Upton, Gilbert, Volpe, 2014; (Vittrup, 2018)).

Acknowledging that race exists primarily as a social construction has prompted some social scientists to replace the concept of race with the concept ethnicity (Kuhn, & Lurie, 2018). Ethnicity refers to a group of people who share a similar culture, history, belief system, and pattern of behavior. It refers to one's sense of belonging to a group, and is therefore, viewed as a psychological construct that is not necessarily interchangeable with race or culture, but may include aspects of both (Lee, Steinberg, & Piquero, 2010). Additionally, some social scientists indicated that ethnicity not only includes cultural behaviors but social/political realities. For example, perception of discrimination and of one's minority status has been linked to varying degrees of ethnic identification, which implies that ethnic identification is facilitated by shared cultural experiences. Ethnicity is therefore a central component of culture, although ethnicity should not be viewed as indicative of specific attitudes, beliefs, or behaviors (Kuhn, & Lurie, 2018; Miech, Johnston, Bachman, O'Malley, & Schulenberg, 2017).

Ethnic socialization is generally viewed in the literature as serving a protective function (Stevenson, & Arrington, 2009). Thomas, and Blackmon (2015) suggest that ethnic socialization act as an antecedent to ethnic identity, and as influencing both prosocial and academic outcomes. The focal point for much of the research on ethnic socialization primarily centers on the content of socialization messages, and to a lesser degree, the modes or means parents use to transmit values and beliefs, which helps to forge the identity and character of their children. In fact, Forsyth, and Carter (2012) emphasized the importance of healthy ethnic identity development stating that it serves to protect juveniles' members of diverse populations from social deviant tendencies.

Additionally, the studies of Seaton, Upton, Gilbert, and Volpe.(2014) found that higher levels of identity development were positively related to successful management of stress and negatively related to problem behaviors. The purpose of this study is to examine several dimensions of ethnic socialization identified in the literature in order to understand how these dimensions may differentially impact outcomes for African American and Latino youth. While most studies have focused on the presumed outcomes of racial/ethnic socialization (i.e. racial/ethnic identity, racial/ethnic attitudes), fewer have examined the socialization process itself. The area of racial/ethnic socialization is a very new and burgeoning area of research with much work to be done. This study builds upon and extends past research by focusing on the Impact of ethnic socialization process on juvenile delinquency.

It is noteworthy that several theoretical methods and measures of ethnic socialization are identified in the literature that addresses the content of ethnic socialization messages and their effect on juvenile delinquency. Stevenson, and Arrington (2009) distinguished several dimensions of ethnic socialization including (1) emphasizing ethnic pride, (2) awareness of racism and discrimination, and (3) intergroup relations. This study focused on ethnic socialization types found to be most relevant to youth propensity to engage in delinquent behaviors and that corresponded closely to dimensions conceptualized in other research, which suggested that the emphasis on cultural pride helps parents prepare children to interpret and cope with prejudice, discrimination, and negative group images emanating from the larger society (Underhill, 2018). Instilling pride in one's racial heritage therefore acts as a buffer and has been linked to enhanced identity development and academic performance. Pride has been shown to be particularly meaningful for minority youth, specifically about their ethnic identity and feelings regarding their ethnic group (Seaton, et al., 2014; Thomas, & Blackmon, 2015).

The studies of Dillon, Pantin, Robbins, and Szapocznik (2008) have indicated that an awareness of barriers may create a sense of hopelessness and blocked opportunity and as a consequence of this experience, African American and Latino youth develop a social identity that promotes disengagement from school and forge deviant tendencies. Nevertheless, empirical research by Lee, Steinberg, and Piquero (2010) indicated that preparation for barriers may be related to increased academic achievement. In fact, some scholars have emphasized socialization of barriers as a normative task of minority parents, allowing children to negotiate potential blocked opportunities due to race (Miech, Johnston, Bachman, O'Malley, & Schulenberg, 2017; Omoruyi, 2014). While the empirical research in the relevant literature has established the significance of this dimension in the ethnic socialization process, it has not conclusively determined the impact of ethnic socialization toward barriers on child outcomes.

The degree of contact a member of a diverse populations have with their own group or other ethnic groups may act as a key feature of ethnic socialization that also needs to be explored. It is noteworthy, some researchers see socialization that fosters alienation from mainstream values fosters delinquent behaviors in adolescents and poor academic performance (Forsyth, & Carter, 2012). Although the literature has failed to thoroughly examine this dimension of ethnic socialization, studies that have examined this dimension report that the incidence of socialization toward social distance is quite low. In fact, the studies of Zucker & Patterson (2018) found that only 27% of parents instructed their children to maintain social distance from Whites.

Tyler, Fagan, and Geller (2014) in their definition of ethnic socialization highlight the process of socialization as opposed to its outcomes. Their work is particularly noteworthy since many studies of ethnic socialization have operationalized it in terms of its presumed outcomes. They focus on the transmission of messages verbally, through modeling, and through contextual assimilation (constructing one's environment in a manner that reflects a particular culture) For our purposes, ethnic socialization is defined broadly in the sense that it addresses both multiple dimensions of this construct as well as multiple modes of communication including verbal/direct, nonverbal/behavioral, and contextual/environmental (Forsyth, & Carter, 2012; Underhill, 2018).

Acknowledging that race exists primarily as a social construction has prompted some social scientists to replace the concept of race with the concept ethnicity (Zucker & Patterson (2018). Ethnicity refers to a group of people who share a similar culture, history, belief system, and pattern of behavior. It refers to one's sense of belonging to a group and is therefore viewed as a psychological construct that is not necessarily interchangeable with race or culture, but may include aspects of both (Tyler, et al., 2014). Additionally, some social scientists indicated that ethnicity not only included cultural behaviors but social/political realities (Roché, & Oberwittler, 2018). For example, perception of discrimination and of one's minority status has been linked to varying degrees of ethnic identification, which implies that ethnic identification is facilitated by shared cultural experiences. Ethnicity is therefore a central component of culture, although ethnicity should not be viewed as indicative of specific attitudes, beliefs, or behaviors (Seaton, et al., 2014; Zucker & Patterson, 2018).

Effective ethnic socialization, however, focuses exclusively on parental communications to their children, while it is understood that children receive messages from a variety of sources about their race and ethnicity and that the socialization process is transactional (Seaton, et al., 2014). According to Zucker & Patterson (2018), parents are important mediators of the child's racial knowledge. Although ethnic socialization dimensions have been described here as a distinct process, it is much more difficult to distinguish children during the socialization process. Parents often embed two or more ethnic socialization messages in their communications. For example, parents might instill pride while at the same time preparing their children for race-related barriers (Ryan, Hinterlong, Hegar, & Johnson, 2008b). For the purposes of this study, ethnic socialization dimensions will be considered as distinct in order to facilitate examination of delinquency using social control as an underlying theoretical model.

3.0. Social control theory

Social control theory provided some justification for assuming that ethnic socialization precedes acceptance of ethnic attitudes, school engagement, achievement, and juvenile delinquency while exploring the effectiveness of *generalized social reinforcers* to understand delinquency in terms of sociocultural, emotional, and psychological context. These constructs emphasized the influence of the social environment and the interpersonal relationships that develop within the social environment on the youth's outcomes. Thus, the elements of Hirschi's (1969) social control theory assists in explaining delinquency and Bronfenbrenner (1969) explains the various systems that contributes to the emotional and psychological development of a child. Youth's positive developmental process is contingent on healthy parents, and caregiver's socialization processes in ensuring a bond is developed (Seaton, et al., 2014; Ryan, et al., 2008b).

The elements of Hirschi's (1969) social control theory will assist in explaining the association of ethnic socialization lack of educational attainment and delinquency. Youth's positive developmental process is contingent on healthy parents and caregiver's socialization techniques (Ryan, et al., 2008b). Ethnic socialization processes that are flawed or inadequate in meeting a child's needs risk the likelihood that the child will lack the sense of attachment and commitment, which is vital in solidifying relationships with family members and traditional role models (Ryan, et al., 2008b). Social control posits social bond is critical in ensuring youth abstain from delinquent behaviors. A lack of investment in social bonding creates a weakness and difficulties in conforming to social norms (Hirschi, 1969). According to Hirschi (1969), "Delinquent acts result when an individual's bond to society is weak or broken. Social bonds to conventional society are composed of four elements 'attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief' (p. 16). When youth are confronted with the option to engage in delinquent or deviant behaviors, those youth with a strong bond are more likely to conform and refrain from such behaviors, to ensure not to jeopardize relationships that are important (Hirschi, 1969). The two main components in social control are attachment and commitment, which represents the key ingredients of the social control theory (Ryan et al., 2008b).

3.1. Attachment

Attachment is defined as an emotional and psychological attachment to significant others, which is a vital and significant consequence of developing social bonds (Marcus, 1991). Those youth who lack a sufficient level of attachment are prone to reject moral restraints (Hirschi, 1969). The inability or non-compliance in adhering to moral, social norms, and the insensitive to others, equates to youth who have an increased propensity to engage in delinquent behaviors. To predict a healthy psychological development, child welfare professionals support the notion that attachment is a critical attribute and foundation in the provision of care (Hirschi, 1969; Testa, 2013).

When there is a positive relationship between foster children and their foster care provider it decreases emotional and psychological distress, which is common among youth in foster care, due to separation from their biological parents or guardians. Additionally, attachment creates the ideal conditions for youth in foster care to develop relational skills that will carry over into adulthood (Ferguson, & Wolkow, 2012). There is a consensus in the literature regarding the significant impact the role of attachment has on the developmental process of youth. The limited and inconsistent evidence in the literature that focuses on social bond among youth in foster care is an important factor to examine.

According to a 2001 study in Wisconsin consisting of 141 foster care youth aging out of the child welfare system, 75% of youth felt close to their foster caregivers, 40% remain in contact with their foster care parent, and 20% continue to receive emotional support (Courtney, Piliavin, Grogan-Kaylor & Nesmith, 2001). Of the above-reported cases, 37% ran away from their foster homes, 32% felt lonely, 28% felt foster parent's biological children were treated more favorably, and 34% reported mistreatment. Also, a study conducted by Dillon, Pantin, Robbins & Szapocznik, (2008) indicated 18% of children in foster care lived in "at risk" homes. The parent-child relationship within the foster care home is vital to understand the propensities for problematic behavior among this vulnerable population who are placed in kinship and non-Kinship Placement.

Attachment theory considers the natural tendency of kin to care for their own despite any challenging circumstances while acknowledging the power of social attachments that unite foster children and caregivers. Research supports the conclusion that kin caregivers demonstrate altruistic acts towards children in their care and that children benefit from this altruism (Testa, 2013). Kin caregivers commonly make financial sacrifices to the care of their relative's children that exceeds government benefits (Testa, 2013). The importance of family connections is assumed in kinship care, and this assumption is commonly framed in kinship care literature within two of the four theoretical constructs of social control/social bonding theory, attachment, and commitment. One overarching construct includes the human development attachment view that describes the psychological benefit to foster children who presumably achieve a greater sense of stability when cared for by someone known to them than those cared for by someone who is unfamiliar. The other construct used to understand kinship care is based on the sociocultural level of commitment that an individual must abide by legal behavior (Ferguson, & Wolkow, 2012). Both constructs emphasize the influence of the social environment and the interpersonal relationships that develop within the social environment on outcomes for children.

Attachment theory allows for the idea that genetically related individuals share an innate sense of connection (Ferguson, & Wolkow, 2012). Bowlby (2004) proposed that attachment between humans promotes care and safety, thereby improving the chance of positive outcomes. The implication is that the maintenance of attachment relationships, continuity, and cultural identity are the key influences on life trajectories for children in kinship foster care. Consequently, the supposition might be made that one attachment relationship is equal to another regardless of biological relatedness or lack thereof, so long as it supports the child's sense of self and provides connectedness over time (Ferguson, & Wolkow, 2012; Testa, 2013).

3.2. Commitment

Commitment is conceptualized as an individual's investment in traditional institutions in society. Investments may be commodities such as relationships, educational attainment, and employment, which may be at risk if an individual engages in delinquent behaviors (Polakowski, 1994). School and church are the most popular and observable establishments. Literature examining the relationship between a lack of education or lack of commitment to education and delinquency has demonstrated consistent reliability. Research has indicated a higher likelihood of delinquency among juveniles who maintain a low academic achievement, have problems with teachers and peers, disregard or disrespect of authority, and have high dropout rate (Bigler, & Suizzo, 2012; Ferguson, & Wolkow, 2012).

4.0. Conceptual Issues in the Study of Ethnic Identity

Identity formation is viewed as the central task of adolescence and ethnic identity is said to mediate the relationship between ethnic socialization and psychosocial outcomes. Ethnic socialization includes messages that relate to both personal and group identity (Seaton, et al., 2014). Although ethnic socialization is generally considered to impact children's identity, there is little empirical research on the relationship between these variables.

Zucker, and Patterson (2018) examined the relationship between ethnic identity and ethnic socialization and found that parents who engaged in more ethnic socialization had children who felt greater attachment to their ethnic group. Nevertheless, identity research has not historically included ethnicity as a domain to be considered, as such, ethnic identity has not been studied developmentally (Forsyth, & Carter, 2012). Instead, ethnic identity is understood as the part of an individual's self-concept that derives from his/her membership in a particular ethnic group (Thomas, A., 2007; Zucker, and Patterson, 2018).

Recently researchers have pointed to the importance of ethnic identity for minority youth in particular, suggesting that it has a role in healthy psychological functioning (Forsyth, & Carter, 2012; Seaton, et al., 2014; Shanyang, Grasmuck, & Martin, 2008). Since this is a relatively new area of inquiry, there is considerably more theoretical work in this area than empirical research. Researchers studying ethnic identity have used a variety of approaches to assess various aspects of this construct, and there is little consensus on the components to include in such measurement. Most measures developed have been used for study with a particular ethnic group and contain items that cannot be used across groups (McGloin, Chris, & Kyle, 2014). It is not clear whether it is possible to study ethnic identity as a phenomenon with commonalities across groups or whether unique group experiences make such generalization impossible. Coupled with this, it is not clear how ethnic identity develops among youth or the impact of ethnic socialization on identity development (Hawdon, J., 2012; Seaton, et al., 2014).

4.1. Conceptual Issues Related to the Study of Ethnic Identity Among African American Youth

Most of the ethnic identity research has focused on African Americans historically. African Americans have been at the boom of the social structure, facing both racism and discrimination within the dominant culture. As a result, conceptualizations of ethnic identity development for this group have been understood as a reaction to dominant culture (Lee, Steinberg, & Piquero, 2010). However, other work in this area has suggested that ethnic identity development is not shaped exclusively by one's response to the dominant culture. It includes personal maintenance of cultural heritage, relationship to the dominant culture, as well as experience with racism and discrimination (Seaton, et al., 2014). Conceptualized as environmental stressors, racism and discrimination present challenges to the development of positive self-concept as a member of a minority group. This is illustrated in the work of Thomas, and Blackmon (2015) who emphasized that African American parents are faced with the unique challenge of raising physically and emotionally healthy children who are Black in a society in which being Black has negative connotations. Although much of the work in this area is theoretical rather than empirical, many studies have demonstrated the importance of examining this construct by demonstrating its relationship to psychosocial outcomes.

Early research in the area of ethnic identification among African American children was conducted using projective techniques such as dolls and/or pictures. These studies typically required youth to respond to the degree of attractiveness of these items that varied by skin color, hair texture, and facial features. There were several methodological problems with early research including operationalization of racial preference, validity of the measures used, and conclusions drawn from such studies thus, making conclusions drawn questionable at best (Dillon, et al., 2008). The studies of Lee, et al. (2010) found that African American children typically used personal and group identity measures when assessing ethnic identity. Personal identity measures seek to assess an individual's feelings about him/herself, including self-esteem, self-worth, ego-identity, etc.

Group identity measures, however, seek to assess an individual's feelings about his/her religious heritage, gender, or ethnic group. Such divergent conceptualizations of ethnic identity have made it difficult to study. Hawdon, (2012) suggested that it might be particularly problematic to study ethnic identity among historically disparaged groups because there are multiple issues that impact such groups. Ethnic identity is therefore not only related to discrimination and exclusion but also to characteristics of the group itself (Forsyth, & Carter, 2012). Diverse group members must therefore resolve issues of maintenance of one's own cultural heritage, relationship to the dominant culture, and experiences of prejudice and discrimination, suggesting that the study of ethnic identity in these groups is multifaceted (Seaton, et al., 2014; Stewart, Baumer, Brunson, & Simons, 2009).

4.2. Conceptual Issues Related to the Study of Ethnic Identity Among Latino(a) Youth

Although most of the theoretical and empirical research has focused on ethnic identity development in African Americans, some research has started to examine ethnic identity development among Latino groups (Davidson, & Cardemil, 2009). Within many of these models, ethnic identity development is conceptualized in the context of oppression.

More recent work has further expanded the model to consider unique qualities of the group that support positive ethnic identity development apart from racism and discrimination. therefore, Davidson, and Cardemil (2009) work suggest that diverse status plays an important role in the development of ethnic identity. Nonetheless, several additional issues are important when considering ethnic identity development in Latino youth, which include: Immigration history, nationality, generational status, and language all influence the development of ethnic identity (Forsyth, & Carter, 2012; Lee, et al., 2010).

According to Forsyth, and Carter (2012), ethnic identity development issues play a vital role in determining an individual's feelings about him/herself as well as their ethnic group. Subsequently, issues impacting identity development is becoming a growing area of inquiry, although the relevant research literature has not yet considered the complexity of ethnic identity development in Latino youth. Nevertheless, studies linking acculturation to ethnic identity development among African Americans has substantially increased in the last decade. Lee, et al. (2010) stress the importance of understanding ethnic identity among diverse groups, and its relationship to acculturation across the life span. Life span studies of ethnic identity development are expected to illuminate Latino and African American identity development as well as its possible correlates. Pokhrel, Unger, Wagner, Ritt-Olson, and Sussman, (2008) demonstrated an inverse relationship between ethnic identity and acculturation. Further, researchers have found that Latino immigrants have higher incidence of involvement in delinquent behaviors than those born in the United States (Forsyth, & Carter, 2012; Pokhrel, et al., 2008).

It is likely that acculturation stress, significantly contributes to deviant behaviors, however, ethnic socialization within Latino groups may act as a buffer against their engagement in delinquent acts. Several methodological issues must be considered when dealing with African Americans, and Latinos while individually categorizing them as homogenous groups. Assessment of ethnic identity is enhanced when examining ethnic groups separately (Hawdon, 2012). This suggests that ethnic identity development is complex, as there is considerable intragroup variability. In addition, it suggests that the study of ethnic identity in Latino populations must address social, cultural, and linguistic diversity. Often, ethnic groups have their own sub-idiosyncrasies, racially fragment and in need of a socialization process that addresses their subgroups culture (Roché, & Oberwittler, 2018; Seaton, et al., 2014).

4.3. Methodological Implications of Grouping African American and Latino Youth

There is limited research on the ethnic socialization process and even less information that examines ethnic socialization across groups. To date, there is no single measure that examines the association of ethnic socialization and delinquency across groups. While there are differences across groups that can be attributed to divergent histories, traditions, beliefs, and attitudes, there are also commonalities. Lee, et al. (2010) argued that all ethnic group members have in common self-identification as a group member, sense of belonging, and attitudes toward the group (Davidson, & Cardemil, 2009; Forsyth, & Carter, 2012).

Other research (Yancey, Aneshensel, & Drisceoll, 2001) examining interethnic comparisons of ethnic identity development indicated that African Americans and Latinos tend to score similarly on a revised version of the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure, which supports the notion that there are similarities across ethnic groups and that a single model could capture both interethnic variation as well as commonalities. Given that both groups have in common diverse status they would likely have a similar socialization pattern (Wolfe, et al., 2017), which may include transmission of ideas regarding each specific cultural group, relationship to the dominant culture, and experiences that may be a product of diverse status (i.e. racism and discrimination). Subsequently, ethnic socialization serves the purpose of maintaining cultural heritage of a juvenile from a diverse background while informing their relationship to the dominant culture and informing their experience with racism and discrimination (Bonilla-Silva, 2014). These practices can likely be captured by measurements that examines the process by which parents communicate these ideas to their children (Forsyth, & Carter, 2012; Gee, & Ford, 2011).

5.0. Delinquency.

According to Berger, Cancian, Han, Noyes, & Rios-Salas (2015), lower levels of ethnic socialization lead to lower levels of academic attainment and greater likelihood of youth becoming involved in the juvenile justice system. Study findings also showed that lower levels of academic success negatively impact students leading to different psycho-sociological problems later in life including involvement with drugs and substance abuse, criminal engagement, arrests, and incarceration (Ainsworth & Hansen, 2014; Berlin, Vinnerljung, & Hjern, 2011).

Several studies found that lower levels of academic attainment are rather common among students from Latino and African American families (Ainsworth & Hansen, 2014; Berger et al., 2015; Cox, 2013).

Furthermore, the research literature abounds with evidence of the impact of lower levels of academic success, and involvement in the juvenile justice system. Raising the ethnic socialization of a child who is victimized by the psychosocial ills of their racially oppressed parents reduces the chances of engaging in criminal activities and instead, becoming academically successful (Warburton et al., 2014). In addition, skill building, accountability, goal setting, communication, or relationship buildings are critical for individuals to become successful learners both in academics and in non-academic areas of life. Champagne (2014) suggested that there is an immense amount of evidence found from prior studies on academic support programs that represent a practical means of intervention when dealing with at-risk students from ethnically diverse background. Research conducted by Gooden, Jabbar, and Torres (2016) demonstrated that participation in academic support groups and mentoring has a significant impact on students' grade point averages and overall successes. Mentors and fellow participants assist each other in the quest to achieve academic goals and offer significant opportunities for achieving aspirations of higher education with considerable success.

Understanding the problems that plague youth's educational experience, such as lack of ethnic socialization, goal clarity, decreased motivation, lack in study skills, disorganized thinking, financial stress, lack of motivation, and lack of academic support represent a critical component in implementing early intervention that is individualized to meet the needs of at-risk youth. Other research has indicated that ethnic socialization may be mediated by parental resources, thereby influencing the degree to which parents engage in these practices (Ma, Pender, & Welch, 2016). Furthermore, Zinn (2012) highlighted the significance of the extended family with regard to ethnic socialization suggesting that parents are not the only socializing agents for their children. Research consensus validate that children receive racial barrier messages and family dynamics plays a vital role in the developmental process among children and the risk of delinquency are intertwined within the fabric of family ethnic socialization and dynamics (Bigler, & Suizzo, 2012; Forsyth, & Carter, 2012; Zucker, & Patterson, 2018). The above stated problems plaguing children are associated closely with the lack of emotional support and organizational structures within the African American and Latino families (Farrington, 1994).

6.0. Summary

The empirical research has found that approximately two thirds of African American parents communicate explicit messages regarding race and ethnicity while fewer Latino parents communicate explicit messages regarding race and ethnicity (Davidson, & Cardemil, 2009). This study found that most parents did not view ethnic socialization to be salient in their parenting practices. It is not clear why some parents and not others use ethnic socialization. It safe to assume that race and ethnicity is not a primary concern for parents preparing their children to face a variety of challenges. Nevertheless, some researchers have suggested that ethnic socialization may be less beneficial and may be viewed by some parents as counterproductive (Thomas, & Blackmon, 2015). The studies of Underhill (2018) found that parents who had less resources engaged in less ethnic socialization, suggesting that ethnic socialization appears to be a less salient practice among parents with more environmental stressors.

Zinn (2012) found that children reported less ethnic socialization messages than their parents reported imparting, while others found the opposite. This may depress the amount of ethnic socialization reported across studies. One of the obvious problems in the literature is the use of diverse measures of ethnic socialization and the apparent lack of agreement about what constitutes ethnic socialization. Despite the lack of agreement, studies have found that ethnic socialization was related to self-efficacy, academic performance, and prosocial behaviors. There is however some debate as to the direction of this relationship. It is assumed that contradictory findings are more due to problems in measurement. To date, ethnic socialization studies have primarily focused on the presumed outcomes of socialization (i.e. ethnic attitudes) and their relationships to outcomes, like academic achievement. This study is unique in that it attempts to operationalize and examine the socialization process, which means examining not only multiple dimensions of ethnic socialization, but multiple modes as well (Forsyth, & Carter, 2012; Underhill (2018); Warburton et al., 2014).

7.0. Implications for Practice

This study has both clinical and scientific utility. To identify prevention and intervention methods, practitioners need to understand the experiences adolescents have that contribute to academic underachievement and juvenile delinquency. This study helps to identify parenting practices that lead to thriving behaviors and those that might lead to adverse outcomes. Practitioners need to understand and assess the unique ways in which people from diverse backgrounds socialize their children to bolster those socialization practices that are beneficial and intervene where necessary.

The results indicated that ethnic socialization plays a role in the development of ethnic attitudes, school engagement, achievement, and thriving behaviors. Several studies have established the importance of ethnic socialization by demonstrating its relationship to academic and mental health outcomes (Bowman & Howard, 1985, Smith et al. in press.). This study complements and expands past research by showing that ethnic socialization impacts several African American and Latino youth outcomes. Additionally, this study demonstrates that ethnic socialization may be particularly salient for youth living in unstable and impoverished neighborhoods.

8.0. Directions for Future Research

The present study suggests the need for future research while highlighting the benefits of examining the dynamic relationship between ethnic socialization, achievement, school engagement, and positive outcomes. Future research might assess the impact of extended family and neighborhood climate on ethnic socialization. While some research has examined the immediate family's impact, there is very little known about sources of ethnic socialization outside of the immediate family. The identification of such sources can be helpful when researching racial/ethnic groups whose extended family traditionally plays a vital role in raising and socializing youth.

According to Zucker, and Patterson (2018), some initial work has attempted to assess the impact of the school in socializing youth. Youth spend most of their time in school, as such, the school environment provides essential sources of information about the youth's identity. Additionally, teachers' communication skills about race/ethnicity likely impact the socialization process (Bigler, & Suizzo, 2012). Given the importance of ethnic socialization on several outcomes, it is essential to examine socializing agents in the lives of youth. Besides, very little is known about how neighborhood and community level variables impact the socialization process or the development of individual ethnic attitudes. The studies of Wallerstein, Duran, Sanchez-Youngman, Nguyen, Woo, Kaholokla, Israel, and Alegria (2018) suggested that the community is an essential source of information regarding the opportunities available within the youth's ethnic group. It is likely that the proportion of people within the adolescent's community within their own racial/ethnic group and the relative success of those community members likely provide important socialization messages (Bigler, & Suizzo, 2012; Wolfe et al., 2017).

Understanding how neighborhood/community level variables impact the socialization process may provide key insights necessary for understanding the complexities of the socialization process. Finally, longitudinal research would provide definitive answers about the relationship between neighborhood, ethnic socialization, and individual outcomes. Little is known about how neighborhood racial/ethnic composition or socioeconomic status affects ethnic socialization. Longitudinal research would provide a greater understanding of how this process changes over time in different neighborhoods and would provide definitive answers about causality. Most importantly, it would provide valuable information for developing appropriate interventions at the individual and community levels (Stevenson, & Arrington, 2009; Wallerstein et al., 2018).

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