

Depressive Symptoms of Latinx Youth: Examining Familism, Boundary Ambiguity, and Bicultural Stress

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Abstract

Guided by the Integrative Model for Developmental Competencies in Minority Children (Garcia Coll et al., 1996), this study examined how familism may moderate the relation between boundary ambiguity or bicultural stress and depressive symptoms. Latinx youth participants ($N = 136$; age 14-18 years) were recruited in a predominantly low income community in the Southwestern United States. Results indicate a positive significant associate between familism and depressive symptoms. Results also showed that the interaction between familism and boundary ambiguity for depressive symptoms was significant.

Background

- Bicultural stress is when individuals experience stress as they navigate two cultural contexts (Romero & Piña Watson, 2017; Romero & Roberts, 2003).
- Bicultural stress is associated with worse mental health and more risky behaviors in teens (Romero, Carvajal, Valle, and Orduña, 2007); however, it has not been explored in terms of familism as a moderator (Garcia Coll et al., 1996).
- Using the integrative model for the developmental competencies in minority children (García Coll et al., 1996), this study will investigate how familism may contribute to resilience of youth against bicultural stress or family boundary ambiguity .
- Familism is shown to have influence on positive psychological functioning among Latinx and immigrant adolescents (Stein et al., 2014).
- Latinx students who display high levels of achievement guilt are more likely to experience mental health (Covarrubias et al., 2015).

Methods

Participants and Procedures

Latinx youth participants ($N = 133$) were recruited in a predominantly low income community in the Southwestern United States. Age ranged between 13-19 years old. In regard to sex, 55.2% were female.

Measures

Measures included: frequency of *familism*, a 15-item scale (Romero & Ruiz, 2007; $\alpha = .94$), *Boundary Ambiguity of Family Relationships*, a 12-item, newly developed scale to evaluate the sense of loss or confusion surrounding family relationships in the context of child's educational success ($\alpha = .76$), *bicultural stress*, using the Bicultural Stress Scale, a 17-item scale (Romero & Roberts, 2003), *economic stress*, a 4-item scale, *achievement guilt* (Covarrubias, Romero, & Trivelli, 2015), and depressive symptoms (Radloff, 1997).

Results

For correlations, familism was negatively correlated with bicultural stress, and familism was negatively correlated with depressive symptoms. Financial stress was positively correlated with bicultural stress. Financial stress was also positively correlated with achievement guilt.

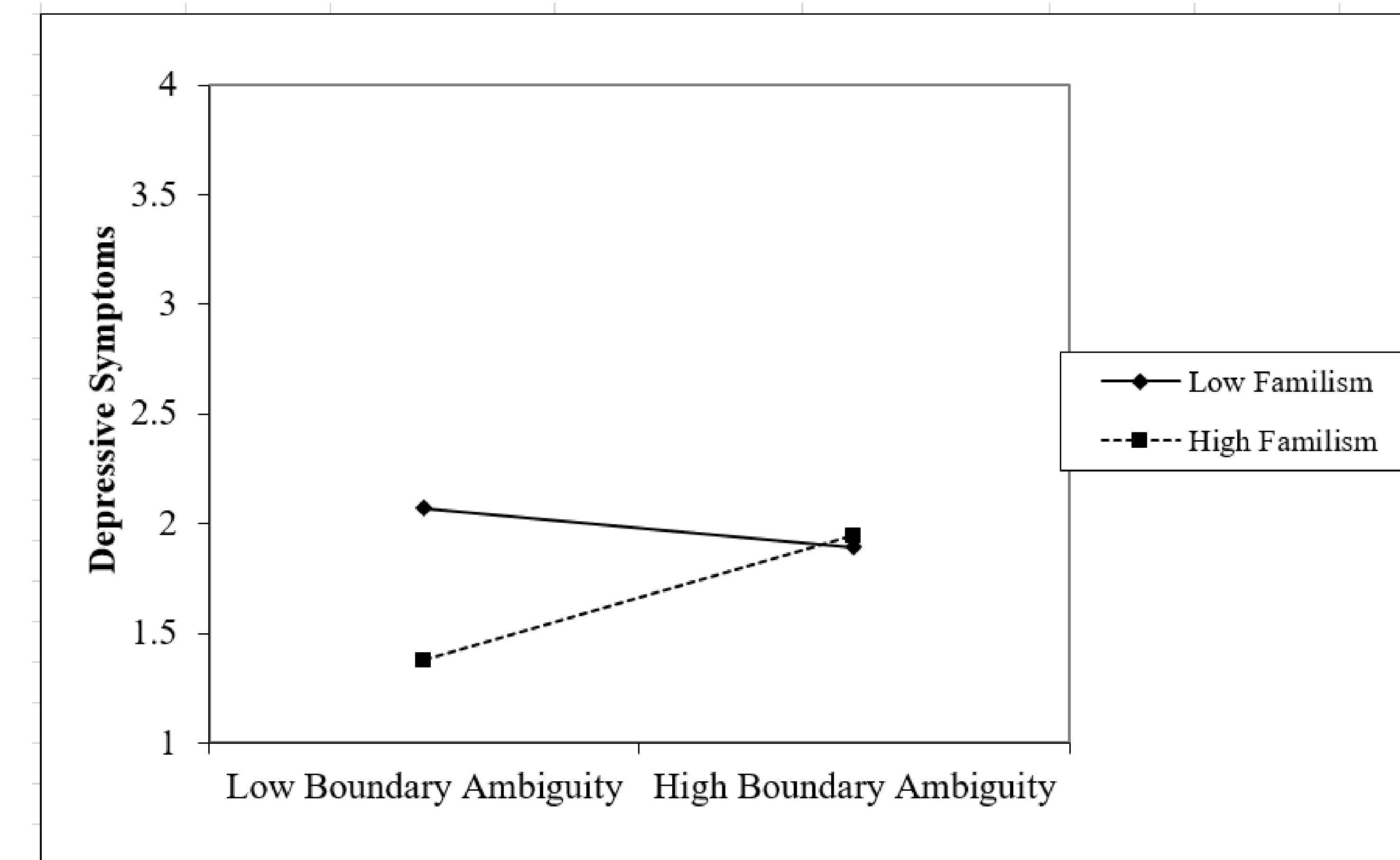
Table 1: Regression Model

| Variables | <i>B</i> | <i>SE B</i> | β | R^2 | <i>F</i> |
|-----------------------------------|----------|-------------|---------|-------|----------|
| Model: Depressive Symptoms | -- | -- | -- | 0.95 | 306.00** |
| Bicultural Stress | -0.06 | 0.06 | -0.98 | -- | -- |
| Achievement Guilt | 0.10 | 0.06 | 1.478 | -- | -- |
| Economic Stress | 0.18 | 0.06 | 0.27** | -- | -- |
| Boundary Ambiguity | 0.10 | 0.11 | 0.09 | -- | -- |
| Familism | -0.16 | 0.05 | -3.39** | -- | -- |
| Familism X Boundary Ambiguity | 0.19 | 0.08 | 0.19* | -- | -- |

Note: * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

Results

Figure 1: Interaction Graph



Conclusions and Implications

- This results of this study illuminates the protective role of familism behaviors and how it can mitigate the effects between boundary ambiguity and depressive symptoms.
- It is important for individuals working with Latinx youth and families, especially those in the education field to acknowledge the benefits, as well as sacrifices, that come with obtaining educational success.
- This study is important as students continue to pursue their education and place salience into the behaviors/motives that may constitute familism.

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