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**To be in harmony: Chinese American adolescents' and parents' bicultural
integration during the COVID-19 pandemic**

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Abstract

Experiences of racial discrimination have been found to be associated with internalizing problems in ethnic-racial minority youth. However, mediating and moderating processes that might explain this association is less well understood. Thus, the present study aimed to examine whether Chinese American adolescents' bicultural identity integration harmony (BII-Harmony) mediated the association between their experiences of racial discrimination and internalizing behaviors. Further, we examined the moderating role of their parents' BII-Harmony in this mediation model. Chinese American adolescents ($M_{\text{age}} = 13.9$ years; $SD = 2.34$; 48% female) reported their experiences of racial discrimination and BII-Harmony, and their parents ($M_{\text{age}} = 46.2$ years; $SD = 5.2$; 81% mothers) reported their BII-Harmony and their children's internalizing difficulties. Chinese American adolescents' racial discrimination experiences were negatively associated with BII-Harmony, and in turn, more internalizing problems, but only when their parents also reported low and mean levels of BII-Harmony.

Keywords: Racial discrimination, Bicultural identity integration, Internalizing problems

Introduction

Although individuals and communities of Asian heritage have long experienced racism in the United States (Gee et al., 2009; Gee et al., 2022), the COVID-19 pandemic has intensified such experiences. The Stop AAPI Hate Reporting Center has documented 10,370 occurrences of hate crimes against Asian Americans between March 2020 to September 2021. Chinese individuals accounted for about 43% of total crimes, the largest ethnic group of victims reporting such crimes (Yellow Horse et al., 2021). Asian Americans' racial discrimination experiences during the pandemic have been found to be related to higher levels of internalizing problems (Lee & Waters, 2021; Woo & Jun, 2021). Cheah et al. (2020) found that about one in two Chinese American adolescents and parents were the victims of in-person racial discrimination during the COVID-19 pandemic, and these experiences were associated with internalizing problems (Cheah et al., 2020).

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Chinese American adolescents may be especially vulnerable to messages of social rejection in the form of racial discrimination, as adolescence is a crucial period for identity development and reconciliation (Erikson, 1968; French et al., 2006). Children acquire fundamental cognitive abilities during childhood to identify and categorize themselves into different ethnic-racial groups. This initial identity formation in childhood is augmented by the cognitive development and socioemotional maturity that occurs during adolescence (Umana-Taylor et al., 2014), in particular, the ability to cognitively link ethnic-racial categorization to specific social consequences (i.e., bias or prejudice; Umana-Taylor, 2014). This cognitive development and interpersonal experiences motivate adolescents to explore their social groups and internalize their heritage and host cultural values (Rivas-Drake et al., 2017; Umana-Taylor et al., 2014). Experiences of racial discrimination can be especially challenging for ethnic minority adolescents as it can impact how adolescents balance and navigate their dominant and heritage cultural values in forming

their various identities, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic (Erikson, 1968; Juang et al., 2018). Research in the area of identity development during adolescence has primarily focused on the internal efforts of the individual; however, parents play an important role in supporting bicultural adolescents' navigation of different cultural grounds and racialized contexts (Koepke & Denissen, 2012; Meca et al., 2021; Schachter & Ventura, 2008). The contributions of both parents' and adolescents' bicultural identities have not been simultaneously explored in past research, particularly in interaction with each other.

At this time of heightened social rejection during the COVID-19 pandemic, it is crucial to better understand the experiences of bicultural adolescents. As an emotionally distressing experience, racial discrimination accentuates mainstream society's rejection of bicultural individuals. These negative societal messages can undermine bicultural adolescents' perceptions that their two cultures and cultural identities are harmonious, and thus garner feelings of insecurity and anxiety. As bicultural adolescents are trying to navigate different cultural and racialized contexts, parents may play an especially crucial role in aiding adolescents' development and adjustment. Therefore, in the current study, we examined the association between Chinese American adolescents' experiences of racial discrimination and their internalizing problems reported during the COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, we assessed whether adolescents' harmonious integration of their Chinese and American cultures and cultural identities mediated such relation. We further explored the role of parents' bicultural identity harmonious integration in moderating the association between adolescents' bicultural integration and internalizing difficulties.

Racial Discrimination and Internalizing Behavior Problems

Racial discrimination refers to individuals' experiences of discriminatory behavior that is motivated by prejudice towards their racial group (Smith-Bynum et al., 2014; Yoo & Lee, 2005). For Asian Americans, experiences of racial discrimination can range from

physical and verbal assault (i.e., being called a “chink” or “gook”) to macro-societal stereotypes (i.e., being overlooked in society for being Asian; Yoo & Lee, 2005). Past studies show that Asian American adults and adolescents commonly experience racial discrimination, which is associated with short and long-term negative mental health outcomes (Benner & Kim, 2009; Choi et al., 2020; Cooc & Gee, 2014; Gee et al., 2009; Juang & Cookston, 2009; Lee & Ahn, 2011). For Chinese American adolescents, racial discrimination has been found to be related to more internalizing problems, including depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation (Choi et al., 2020; Fisher et al., 2000; Greene et al., 2006; Grossman & Liang, 2008; Juang & Alvarez, 2010; Rivas-Drake et al., 2008). Although the link between racial discrimination and internalizing problems among Chinese Americans has been well documented, less known are potential mechanisms that can explain this link (Ward et al., 2018), which is especially necessary to investigate during the period of heightened anti-Asian hate sentiments of the COVID-19 pandemic. To address this limitation, we investigated the mediating role of bicultural identity integration, as discussed next.

Biculturalism and Bicultural Identity Development

As negotiating between cultures is an inherently dynamic and fluid process, researchers have proposed several theoretical conceptualizations of the bicultural experience (Chao & Hong, 2007). One framework put forth by Benet-Martínez and colleagues aimed to gauge biculturals’ subjective perception of the synergetic integration of their cultures and cultural identities (Benet-Martínez et al., 2021). The Bicultural Identity Integration (BII; Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005) framework posits that the integration process is comprised of two psychometrically distinct dimensions: (1) *cultural harmony*, which assesses the perceived compatibility between the two cultures and cultural identities and (2) *cultural blendedness*, which examines the perceived overlap between the two cultures and cultural identities (Huynh et al., 2018).

The existing literature demonstrates that bicultural identity integration harmony (BII-Harmony) represents the affective and interpersonal facet of navigating different cultures and is consistently related to indices such as ethnic-racial discrimination and psychological well-being (e.g., Huynh, 2009; Huynh et al., 2018). In contrast, bicultural identity integration blendedness (BII-Blendedness) has been found to be associated with cognitive and behavioral outcomes, such as language proficiency and bicultural competency (e.g., Huynh, 2009; Huynh et al., 2018). Due to the significant role of the cultural negotiating process among bicultural individuals and its relevance for their mental health, in the current study, we focused on how BII-Harmony may underlie the association between Chinese American adolescents' experiences of racial discrimination and their mental health reported during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Experiences of Racial Discrimination and BII

In addition to correlational studies (e.g., Saleem et al., 2018), experimental research demonstrates a causal influence of ethnic-racial discrimination on lower levels of endorsed BII. Past experiments showed that when highly integrated biculturals were presented with negative emotional stimuli about their ethnicity (i.e., negative stereotypes), this made the tension between their cultures and cultural identities salient and subsequently lowered their reported perceived integration (Benet-Martínez et al., 2002; Cheng et al., 2006). Another study showed that biculturals who recall negative cultural experiences reported significantly lower BII than their counterparts in the positive cultural experiences recall and control conditions (Cheng & Lee, 2013).

These studies demonstrate that negative experiences associated with the cultural negotiating process, including ethnic-racial discrimination that present messages of social rejection of an individual's ethnic-racial and cultural identity, can disrupt one's ability to view their two cultural identities as compatible and integrated (Cheng et al., 2006). Some

research has specifically examined the two distinct dimensions of BII, demonstrating that ethnic-racial discrimination is related to BII-Harmony, but not BII-Blendedness (Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005; Huynh et al., 2018). As an emotionally distressing experience, ethnic-racial discrimination highlights mainstream societies' rejection of bicultural individuals and their minoritized identity, and thus disrupts the perception that their two cultures and cultural identities are compatible and can coexist in harmony.

The Mediating role of BII between Racial Discrimination and Mental Health

Past research has indicated that BII is an important predictor of mental health outcomes (Chen et al., 2008; Schwartz et al., 2015); in particular, higher levels of BII-Harmony is associated with positive mental health outcomes (Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005; Huynh et al., 2018; Tikhonov et al., 2019; Ward et al., 2018). Although BII research has primarily focused on college students and adults, there is a small growing body of work on adolescents (Bishop et al., 2019; Spiegel et al., 2021) that has indicated that perceived integration of individuals' cultures and cultural identities was associated with better mental health outcomes (Ferrari et al., 2015; Ferrari et al., 2019; Manzi et al., 2014; Ni et al., 2016, Schwartz et al., 2015). When biculturals endorse lower levels of perceived harmony, this greater sense of dissonance and incompatibility between their cultures and cultural identities can be harmful to their mental health.

To our knowledge, there is only one study that has examined the role of BII as a potential mediating process between ethnic discrimination and psychological well-being for immigrant adolescents and young adults, aged 15- to 25-years-old, in Italy. Ferrari et al. (2019) found that higher levels of reported ethnic discrimination was associated with lower levels of perceived cultural overlap and balance, which in turn was associated with higher levels of depression. These findings highlighted that for ethnic-racial minority young people, the ability to integrate both cultures and cultural identities into a coherent self-concept may

be an essential developmental task that can have implications for their mental health.

Although Ferrari et al. (2019) examined the mediating role of BII as a unitary construct, past research has shown that BII-Harmony and BII-Blendedness are conceptually and psychometrically distinct subdimensions. In particular, BII-Harmony, not BII-Blendedness, has been found to be related to ethnic-racial discrimination and mental health, the two variables of central focus in the current study. To extend this line of research, the present study specifically focuses on the mediating role of perceived bicultural harmony (i.e., BII-Harmony) between racial discrimination and internalizing difficulties.

The Moderating Role of Parent Bicultural Identity

Research in the area of identity development during adolescence has primarily focused on the internal efforts of the individual, disregarding contextual factors that may facilitate or challenge their identity formation (Koepke & Denissen, 2012; Meca et al., 2021; Schachter & Ventura, 2008). Schachter and Ventura (2008) proposed a contextual theory of identity development that highlights the central role of parents as *identity agents* in their child's identity formation. Childhood identities that are actively cultivated, constructed, and maintained between parents and children become the foundation for identity formation during adolescence (Schachter & Ventura, 2008). One key component that may guide how parents impact the development of their children's identity is parents' own identity.

While adolescents' BII has demonstrated to be an important indicator of their well-being (Ferrari et al., 2015; Manzi et al., 2014; Ni et al., 2016), the role parents' bicultural identity may play in their children's mental health is not known. Some existing research suggests a protective role of parents' ethnic and bicultural identity and their children's internalizing problems. For example, U.S.-born Latinx mothers' ethnic-racial identity was found to be associated with lower levels of child internalizing symptoms (Lazarevic et al., 2020). The researchers suggested that strong identification with their Latinx cultural group

may protect mothers from the negative impact of ethnic-racial discrimination or feelings of being an outsider in the mainstream U.S. culture, which may lead mothers to engage in more cultural socialization practices with their young children (Lazarevic et al., 2020). Growing up in a household that facilitates a stronger understanding of and support for their minoritized cultural identity may act as a protective factor to decrease the development of internalizing problems in children. To our knowledge, the only study that has examined parent bicultural identity demonstrated that higher levels of parents' bicultural identity was associated with lower levels of their pre-school-aged children's internalizing problems (Calzada et al., 2009). The researchers suggested that bicultural parents may raise more competent bicultural children, who are better able to meet the social demands of different cultural environments, which in turn may lead to more positive mental health.

Although past research suggests that parents' identity may be protective for their children's internalizing problems, these studies did not specifically examine the moderating role of parents' bicultural identity (Calzada et al., 2009; Lazarevic et al., 2020). During the COVID-19 pandemic, Chinese American parents' bicultural identity may be critical in protecting their adolescents from a more conflicted bicultural identity amid intensified experiences of racial discrimination targeting Asian Americans. Therefore, in the present study, we aimed to extend past research by examining the protective role of parents' bicultural identity for their adolescents' internalizing difficulties. In particular, we assessed how parents' perceived compatibility between their two cultures and identities may protect their children who report lower perceived cultural harmony from internalizing difficulties during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Present Study: Aims and Hypotheses

The period of heightened social rejection of Asian heritage individuals fueled by the COVID-19 pandemic presents an important opportunity to examine the risk and protective

processes underlying the relation between racial discrimination experiences and internalizing difficulties among Chinese American adolescents. The present study aimed to synthesize different lines of research by examining the association between Chinese American adolescents' experiences with racial discrimination and their internalizing problems, and the role of adolescents and their parents' perceptions of harmony between their Chinese and American cultures and cultural identities. The first aim of the current study was to examine the mediating role of adolescents' BII-Harmony between their experiences of racial discrimination and internalizing problems reported during the COVID-19 pandemic. We predicted that racial discrimination would be negatively associated with BII-Harmony, which in turn would be related to higher levels of internalizing difficulties. Our second aim was to explore the moderating role of parents' BII-Harmony between their adolescents' BII-Harmony and internalizing problems. Based on the limited past research, we predicted that parents' BII-Harmony would buffer adolescents against the negative effects of lower levels of BII-Harmony on their internalizing problems.

Method

Participants

The participants in this study included 219 Chinese American parent-adolescent dyads. Adolescents' ages ranged from 10- to 18-years-old ($M_{\text{age}} = 13.9$ years, $SD = 2.3$, 48% female) and their parents' ages ranged from 33 to 63 years old ($M_{\text{age}} = 46.2$ years, $SD = 5.2$, 81% mothers). The majority of adolescents were born in the United States (79%), with the remainder born in Mainland China (16%), Canada (1.9%), Hong Kong (1%), Singapore (1%), and Taiwan (0.5%). The children who were born in another country lived in the United States for an average of 7.1 years ($SD = 3.2$, range = 1 to 12). Almost all parents (over 98%) were born outside the United States, specifically, Mainland China (90%), Taiwan (6%), Malaysia (1%), Hong Kong (1%), and Canada (0.5%), and had lived in the United States for on

average of 18.4 years ($SD = 8.4$, range = 0 to 60 years). Most parents were married (93%) and middle-class (Hollingshead Four Factor Index $M = 56.24$, $SD = 12.83$). The majority of parents in this sample had obtained at least a bachelor's degree or higher (85%), with 12% of parents having obtained a high school degree or below. The families primarily resided in these states (83%): Maryland/DC area (68%), California (5%), New York (4%), Texas (3%), and Virginia (3%).

Procedure

Participants were recruited through phone calls and flyers e-mailed to various community organizations across the United States and through word of mouth. Flyers were also distributed via the research team's organization and personal social media accounts (Twitter, Facebook, and WeChat). Parents who were interested and met our eligibility criteria of both parents being ethnically Chinese and residing in the United States with children aged 10-to-18-years-of-age were sent the survey links through email or text messages. Parents gave consent online for themselves and their adolescents, and adolescents further provided assent when beginning their survey. Parents and adolescents completed the online surveys via the Qualtrics platform between March 14th to May 31st, 2020. The measures were available in English and simplified or traditional Chinese using the back-translation method completed by bilingual graduate research assistants. Parents and adolescents could select their preferred language to complete the survey and received e-gift cards (\$20 and \$10, respectively) as compensation for their participation. Ethical approval was obtained from the [Blinded] institutional review board.

Measures

All of the measures used in the current study had been previously used and shown to be valid and reliable for Chinese American samples (Yoo & Lee, 2005; Cheah et al., 2021). The descriptive analysis was conducted in SPSS 28.

Demographics

Parents provided demographic information about their family, including each parent and their children's ages, gender, place of birth, years in the United States, place of residence in the United States, and parent education level and occupation type. Family socioeconomic status (SES) was calculated using the Hollingshead Four Factor Index (Hollingshead, 1975).

Racial Discrimination

The Asian-American Racial Discrimination Inventory (AARDI; Yoo & Lee, 2005) is comprised of 9 items that assessed the frequency of adolescents' experiences with racial discrimination in the United States. Sample items include, "In America, I am called names such as, "chink, gook, etc." because I'm Asian." and "In America, I have been physically assaulted because I'm Asian." Adolescents rated how often they experienced each discriminatory incidence on a 5-point Likert-type scale (1 = *almost never* to 5 = *almost always*). The Cronbach's alpha for the AARDI was $\alpha = 0.87$ in the current study.

Bicultural Identity Integration

To assess adolescents' and parents' perceived BII-Harmony between their two cultures and cultural identities, the Bicultural Identity Integration Scale-Version 2 (BIIS-2; Huynh et al., 2018) was used. The BII-Harmony subscale consists of 10 items assessing the degree of an individual's perceived harmony and conflict (e.g., "I find it easy to harmonize Chinese and American cultures", "I find it easy to balance both Chinese and American cultures"). Participants rated each statement on a 5-point Likert-type scale (1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*). Higher scores on the subscale indicate higher perceived harmony between the individuals' two cultures and cultural identities. The Cronbach alpha's for adolescents was $\alpha = .87$ and for parents was $\alpha = .86$.

Internalizing Problems

Parents completed The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ; Goodman, 1997) to assess adolescents' internalizing problems. Based on previous research, a composite internalizing score was computed by averaging 10 items from the emotional and peer problem subscales of the SDQ measure (Goodman et al., 2010). A sample item includes, "Often unhappy, depressed or tearful". Parents rated each statement on a 3-point Likert-type scale (0 = *not true* to 2 = *certainly true*). The Cronbach alpha for the internalizing subscale for the current study was $\alpha = .77$.

Statistical Analyses

The data collected initially included 242 parent-adolescent dyads. Among these participants, 23 adolescents were not included in the analysis as they either did not provide their age or were younger/older than the set age parameters of this study (10 – 18 years old). The total sample size for the current study was 219. Little's MCAR test indicated that the data were missing completely at random, $\chi^2(23) = 19.94, p > .645$. The most missing data occurred for adolescents' reports of racial discrimination (4%). To address the issue of missing data, we utilized the full information maximum likelihood estimation in *Mplus* 8 (Arbuckle, 1996). A moderated mediation model was performed using *Mplus* 8 to explore the model fit and to examine the direct, indirect, and interaction effects among racial discrimination, adolescents' and parents' BII-Harmony, controlling for adolescents' age, gender, and family SES. The interaction terms between adolescents' and their parents' BII-Harmony scores were calculated by first centering both adolescents' and parents' scores and then multiplying the two centered variables in SPSS 28. Conditional indirect effects of adolescents' BII-Harmony were probed by bootstrapping 95% confidence intervals of the unstandardized indirect effects of parents' BII-Harmony at low (1 *SD* below the mean), mean, and high (1 *SD* above the mean) levels. The confidence intervals were generated through

resampling 5000 random samples, and the null hypothesis of the conditional indirect effect was rejected if the confidence interval did not include 0 (Preacher et al., 2007).

Results

The correlations among all study variables are presented in Table 1. Adolescents' BII-Harmony was negatively associated with their experiences of racial discrimination and internalizing problems and positively related with parents' BII-Harmony. Parents' BII-Harmony was negatively associated with adolescents' internalizing problems. Adolescents' age was positively associated with their experiences with racial discrimination. Household SES was positively associated with parents' BII-Harmony but negatively related to adolescents' internalizing problems.

The fit indices demonstrated that the model was a good fit for the current data: $\chi^2(2) = 2.56, p = .28$, RMSEA = .04, SRMR = .02, CFI = .99, TLI = .96. Racial discrimination experiences reported by adolescents were negatively associated with adolescents' BII-Harmony, $\beta = -0.40, b = -0.38, SE = 0.06, p < .001$. In turn, adolescents' BII-Harmony was negatively associated with their internalizing problems, $\beta = -0.20, b = -0.09, SE = 0.03, p = .003$. The indirect effect of adolescents' racial discrimination on internalizing problems through BII-Harmony was positive and significant, $ab = 0.08, 95\% CI = [0.02, 0.14], SE = 0.03, p = .01$. The direct effect of racial discrimination on internalizing problems was not significant, $\beta = 0.03, b = 0.01, SE = 0.03, p = .72$. The direct effect of parental BII-Harmony on adolescent internalizing problems was significant, $\beta = -0.24, b = -0.11, SE = 0.03, p < .001$. Moreover, there was a significant interaction effect between adolescents' and parents' BII-Harmony on adolescents' internalizing problems, $\beta = 0.12, b = 0.08, SE = 0.04, p = .04$, (see Figure 1).

To probe the interaction effect, simple slopes analyses were conducted to examine the effects of adolescents' BII-Harmony on their internalizing problems at lower ($-1 SD$), mean,

and higher (+1 *SD*) levels of parental BII-Harmony. There was a significant positive effect of adolescents' BII-Harmony on internalizing problems at low, $b = 0.05$, $SE = 0.02$, $p = .003$, and mean levels, $b = 0.04$, $SE = 0.01$, $p = .008$, of parental BII-Harmony. However, this effect was not significant at high levels of parents' BII-Harmony, $b = 0.02$, $SE = 0.02$, $p = .286$.

Discussion

In addition to the physical health threat of the COVID-19 virus during the pandemic, Chinese Americans have experienced heightened racial discrimination, which was associated with negative consequences for their mental health (Cheah et al., 2020; Lee & Waters, 2020; Woo & Jun, 2021). Our study sought to elucidate the potential mediating and moderating roles of Chinese American adolescents and their parents' ability to balance their two cultures and cultural identities in the relation between adolescents' experiences of racial discrimination and their internalizing problems reported during the COVID-19 pandemic. The first aim of the current study was to investigate whether Chinese American adolescents' BII-Harmony mediated their experiences of racial discrimination and parent-reported internalizing problems. We found that adolescents who reported experiencing more racial discrimination also reported greater challenges harmonizing between their Chinese and American cultures and cultural identities; in turn, such challenges were associated with more internalizing difficulties as rated by their parents. This finding corroborates previous experimental research examining the causal influence of racial discrimination on lower levels of bicultural integration (Cheng et al., 2006; Cheng & Lee, 2013). For bicultural adolescents, experiences of racial discrimination can be especially challenging as they are in a critical period of identity development learning how to balance and harmonize both their Chinese and American cultures and cultural identities. Experiences of racial discrimination accentuate

mainstream society's rejection of bicultural individuals' heritage culture, undermining adolescents' perceptions that their two cultures and cultural identities are congruous.

The findings from this current study were also in line with past research demonstrating that lower levels of BII-Harmony were associated with poorer mental health in bicultural individuals (Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005; Huynh et al., 2018). The challenge that these individuals may experience in trying to reconcile their Chinese and American cultures and cultural identities, which they perceive to be incompatible and in conflict with each other, may garner feelings of insecurity and anxiety as they are trying to navigate the racialized contexts. This struggle is intensified when bicultural individuals receive messages of social rejection and devaluation about their minoritized identity from the larger society. Although perceived cultural harmony can be an important cultural asset for ethnic-racial minority youth in the United States, its potential role as a mediating mechanism in explaining the association between racial discrimination experiences and mental health outcomes has only started to receive attention in the literature (Ferrari et al., 2019). Therefore, future research needs to continue exploring the complex interplay between bicultural adolescents' two cultures and cultural identities.

Importantly, this mediation association discussed above was only found for adolescents whose parents only reported having low or moderate levels of BII-Harmony, but not among adolescents whose parents reported high levels of BII-Harmony. In other words, when Chinese American adolescents experienced higher levels of racial discrimination, they were more likely to feel that their Chinese and American cultures and identities conflicted, and in turn, display internalizing difficulties, but only when their parents separately reported experiencing more tension between both their cultures and cultural identities. However, the association between Chinese American adolescents' BII-Harmony and their internalizing difficulties was not found when their parents themselves reported that their own Chinese and

American identities were highly compatible, indicating a buffering role of parents' own high levels of harmonious bicultural identity integration.

Past research showed a direct relation between parental cultural identity and their child's internalizing problems (Calzada et al., 2009; Lazarevic et al., 2020). Importantly, our study extended this research by demonstrating the buffering role of parental perceived cultural harmony in the association between their adolescents' perceived cultural conflict and internalizing difficulties, which had not been previously tested, although proposed (Calzada et al., 2009; Lazarevic et al., 2020). These results revealed that Chinese American parents' perception of their two cultures and cultural identities as compatible protected their adolescents from experiencing higher levels of internalizing difficulties, even when adolescents' own perceived bicultural harmony was lowered due to experiences of racial discrimination.

Due to the stay-at-home order and social distancing regulations during the COVID-19 pandemic, the family context may be especially important for adolescents' development and adjustment during intense anti-Asian hate sentiment. For Chinese American families experiencing heightened racial discrimination during the pandemic (Cheah et al., 2020), understanding the role that parents play in their adolescents' negotiation of their bicultural identity is especially crucial. Bicultural parents who perceive harmonious coexistence between their two cultures in their own identities may create a broader family setting that facilitates and equips children with the necessary cognitive, interpersonal, and emotional tools in order to successfully navigate and negotiate both cultural grounds and identities (Nguyen & Benet-Martínez, 2013). In particular, such parents may be better equipped to support their children in perceiving the values, beliefs, and norms from both cultures as congruous, instead of in opposition, by showing their children how to navigate both cultures and cultural identities in a healthy manner. Bicultural parents who do not feel torn between

their Chinese and American cultures may be better able to foster the development of perceived harmony between their children's two cultures and cultural identities, which can be an important source of resilience for adolescents when faced with racial discrimination during a key period of development for social identities (Umana-Taylor et al., 2014).

Limitations and Future Research

This study has several limitations that need to be considered. First, although the cross-sectional approach utilized in this study provided an important first step in this line of research, future research needs to use longitudinal methodology to investigate these associations over time and directly assess the directionality of these constructs as proposed here. For example, a few longitudinal studies have suggested that a stronger ethnic-racial identity is predictive of higher levels of reported ethnic-racial discrimination (Cheon & Yip, 2019; Meca et al., 2020). Future research should examine the temporality and directionality between BII-Harmony and racial discrimination. Furthermore, it is crucial to explore the long-term impact of racial discrimination on adolescents' internalizing problems during the COVID-19 pandemic, but also the role of adolescent and parental BII-Harmony beyond the period of the pandemic. Last, the dynamic bidirectional link between parents and children's bicultural identity processes requires attention in future research.

A second limitation of this study is that we did not examine the specific practices parents may engage in that may shape or facilitate their children's perceived BII-Harmony. Thus, the specific processes that explain how and why high parental BII-Harmony was a protective factor in the relation between adolescents' experiences of racial discrimination, BII-Harmony, and internalizing problems remain to be examined. Future research should extend this study by examining the relation between parental bicultural identification and parenting socialization practices, and how these practices may impact adolescents' bicultural identity and mental health.

Last, the sample size is relatively small and homogenous, which limited our understanding of the role of other demographic characteristics in our proposed model and the generalizability of our findings. Due to the limited sample size, the contributes of adolescent gender and age in these associations could not be directly examined. In addition, due to the specific demographic characteristics of the sample, where adolescents were primarily second generation and coming from middle-class families, the generalization of these findings to Chinese American adolescents of other generations and from lower socioeconomic backgrounds must be done carefully.

Conclusions and Implications

Despite the above limitations, the current study advanced our understanding of the potential mechanisms underlying the impact of experiences of racial discrimination on bicultural adolescents' cultural identities and mental health, and potential protective factors in the family. The increase in immigration over the last few decades (United Nations, 2019) warrants greater study of the bicultural processes within the immigrant family context in order to support the positive adjustment and mental health of bicultural ethnic minority children.

Our study demonstrated that macro-societal and micro-interpersonal level racial discrimination can undermine the way that bicultural individuals perceive the relation between their Chinese and American cultures and cultural identities (Cheng et al., 2006; Cheng & Lee, 2013), which is in turn associated with lower levels of mental health for those adolescents whose parents also struggle to consolidate their two cultures. These findings illustrate the need for schools, workplaces, and communities to create environments that support diversity and inclusion so that both parents and children can develop healthy bicultural identities (Schwartz et al., 2019). The findings from the current study can inform future interventions geared toward promoting perceived harmony between adolescents' and

parents' cultures and cultural identities. For example, Bishop et al. (2019) created a curriculum to help promote bicultural development for adolescents, where one class period was dedicated to cultivating positive attitudes towards both cultures (i.e., BII-Harmony), with post-intervention results demonstrating a significant increase in endorsed BII-Harmony. In addition, governmental efforts are needed to create macro-policies that address structural racism and promote multiculturalism (Kunst et al., 2021; Suárez-Orozco et al., 2018).

To our knowledge, this is the first paper that has investigated the interactive role of adolescent and parental bicultural identities, providing an important first step in furthering our understanding of bicultural identities in the family context. Recent research has started to utilize more developmental approaches to study BII (Schwartz et al., 2015; 2019); our study findings call for more research examining bicultural identity development during adolescence and specifically argues for the need to investigate the role of parents' own identity processes and their impact on adolescents' adjustment.

Table 1*Descriptive Statistics and Correlations Among Study Variables*

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Family SES ^a	—						
2. Adolescent age	.10	—					
3. Adolescent gender ^b	.12	.04	—				
4. Racial Discrimination	.04	.37***	.07	—			
5. ABII-H	.15*	-.13	.05	-.39***	—		
6. PBII-H	.25***	.09	.07	-.13	.19**	—	
7. Internalizing Problems	-.36***	-.09	-.17*	.10	-.30***	-.37***	—
<i>M</i>	56.24	13.9	1.48	1.83	3.66	3.47	1.38
<i>SD</i>	12.83	2.3	.50	0.71	0.68	.65	.32

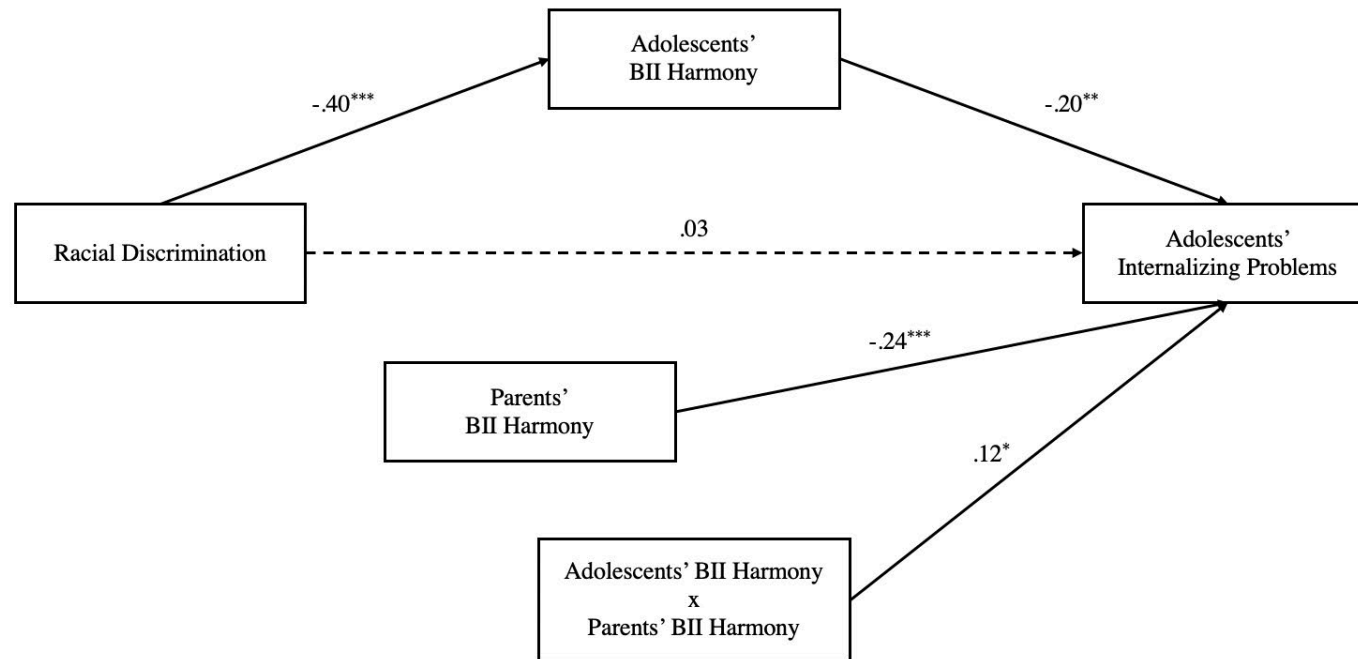
Note. ABII-H = Adolescent Bicultural Identity Integration Harmony. PBII-H = Parent Bicultural Identity Integration Harmony.

^a Family SES scores range from 16 to 66, with higher scores indicating higher SES. ^b 1 = male, 2 = female

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Figure 1

Results from the moderated mediation analyses (paths provide standardized regression coefficients).



Note. This figure is a statistical representation of our moderated mediation, Hayes model 14 (Caron et al., 2020).

BII = Bicultural Identity Integration

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

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