



interSECTIONS Project

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Preparing people to lead extraordinary lives

INTRODUCTION

- Social-emotional competencies (SECs) have long been studied among younger children, where they include self-awareness, self-regulation, relationship skills, social awareness, and responsible decision making (Durlak et al., 2015).
- Development of self-awareness in culturally-adaptive contexts is key to the development academic self-efficacy, self-esteem, and prosocial behavior among immigrant youth (Forrest-Bank, & Jenson, J. M., 2015; Castro-Olivo, 2021).
- However, less is known about how SECs work with one another, especially among immigrant adolescents from under-resourced and racially and ethnically marginalized backgrounds. Furthermore, past research mostly captures SECs using quantitative measures, but by using both qualitative and quantitative approaches can help us better understand culture.
- Thus, this project explores how self-awareness and self-management relate to responsible decision-making and relationship skills using mixed methods.

METHODS

Participants

- Data were collected from a public high school in Chicago that serves predominantly Latinx and Black youth from low-income backgrounds.
- Youth completed an in-person survey (n= 33) and interview (n= 21) during the spring of 2024.

Measures

Survey

- Self-awareness: Youth were asked about their ethnic-racial identity in three different dimensions (exploration, resolution, and affirmation) using the Ethnic Identity Scale (EIS; Umaña-Taylor et al., 2004; $\alpha = .74$).
- Self-management: Youth were asked about self-regulation using the BIS/BRIEF Scales (BRIEF; Gioia et al., 2000; BIS-11; Patton et al., 1995; $\alpha = .86$).
- Social Awareness: Youth answered questions from the System Justification Scale (Kay & Jost, 2003; $\alpha = .81$) and the Critical Consciousness Scale (CCS; Diemer et al., 2017)
 - Perceived Inequality Subscale ($\alpha = .67$)
 - Sociopolitical Efficacy Subscale ($\alpha = .77$)
 - Critical Action Sum Score
- Responsible Decision-Making: Youth were asked about risk-taking behavior within the past year, using a scale adapted from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2016). A sum score of risk-taking behavior was calculated.
- Relationship Skills: Youth were asked about empathy using the Interpersonal and Social Empathy Index (ISEI; Segal et al., 2013; $\alpha = .74$).

Open-Ended Interview

- Interview questions asked about students' experiences with SECs in their own lives as well as their cultural backgrounds.

RESULTS

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of Participants.

Variable	M (or %)	SD
Age	14.2	.85
Gender		
Female	72.7%	
Male	27.3%	
Race/Ethnicity		
African American	51.5%	
Asian/Pacific Islander	20.2%	
Latino/a/x/e	18.2%	
Native American	3.0%	
Language		
Multilingual, English	63.6%	
Monolingual, English	30.3%	
Other	6.1%	
Immigrant Generation		
1 st /2 nd Generation	66.7%	
Non-Immigrant	27.3%	
Familial Continent of Origin		
Africa	39.4%	
North America	30.3%	
Asia	21.2%	
Other	20.8%	

Table 2

Summary of Correlations for SECs

Measure	Ethnic-Racial Identity Scale (Self-Awareness) Mean Total	BIS/BRIEF Scale (Self-Management) Mean Total
Interpersonal and Social Empathy Index (Relationship Skills) Mean Total	.42*	.46**
Risk and Action Scale (Responsible Decision-Making) Sum Total	-.16	-.07
Sociopolitical Efficacy Subscale (Social-Awareness) Mean Total	.28	.09
Critical Action Subscale (Social-Awareness) Sum Total	-.02	-.05
Perceived Inequality Subscale (Social-Awareness) Mean Total	-.02	-.03

Note. Higher scores on all scales indicate higher levels of self-awareness, self-management, social-awareness, responsible decision-making, and relationship skills.
* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

- In addition to the findings in Table 2, there was a positive relation ($r = .55, p < .01$) between sociopolitical efficacy and interpersonal and social empathy.
- There was also a negative relation ($r = -.37, p < .05$) between perceived inequality and system justification. Unexpectedly, sociopolitical efficacy was negatively associated with critical action ($r = -.35, p < .05$).

DISCUSSION

- Overall, it may be that adolescents draw on SECs that operate on an individual level (e.g., self-regulation, ERI) as they engage in SECs that are more social in nature (e.g., relationship skills, sociopolitical efficacy). Our preliminary findings are consistent with the small body of existing literature on immigrant youth's ERI and self-regulation, and show that they also appear among a very diverse group of youth (Forrest-Bank & Jenson, 2015; Olivo, 2021; Rivas-Drake et al., 2020, Sanchez, 2021).

Example quote:

“What does your culture mean to you?”

“My culture is diverse, full of color, and dances and languages. It means a lot to me because it is something I get from both of my parents and it is something I get to share”

- Limitations of this study include its cross-sectional nature and lack of generalizability across a wider range of racial/ethnic and socioeconomic groups. In addition, the critical action measure may not capture the full range of how students carry out their sociopolitical interests, especially among youth from immigrant families.
- Still, these findings suggest that it might be helpful to support immigrant teens' development of self-regulatory competence along with fostering their sense of ethnic-racial identity. Doing so may be especially meaningful for immigrant youth from under-resourced backgrounds. These results are promising because they can help identify the ways that SECs positively work together can inform the efforts of parents, teachers, and adolescents themselves to improve their overall well-being.
- References available upon request.