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In This Global, Multicultural World: Juggling Cultural Identities and Racial Microaggressions

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Abstract

This study examined Asian American college students' (N = 245, mean age = 18.75) multicultural identification strategies in relationship to resilience, using the MULTIIS[1] and the BRS[2]. Moreover, this study explored these youths' responses (numeral rating and open-ended) to microaggressions that differed in salience and tone (developed based on common microaggression themes[3]). Participants completed measures online and anonymously. Results showed that compartmentalization (divergent identities) related negatively to resilience. Explicit microaggression was rated more negatively than was ambiguous microaggression, and the tone of microaggression elicited different responses.

Results

1) Resilience was:
   - negatively related to compartmentalization (keeping identities separated and isolated), r = -.17, $p < .01$
   - unrelated to integration (consolidating identities in harmony), r = -.03, $p = .66$

2) Explicit Negative > Explicit Positive > Ambiguous
   - Main effect of salience, $F(1, 243) = 217.71$, $p < .01$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.47$
   - Interaction between salience and tone, $F(1,243) = 71.73$, $p < .01$, $\eta_p^2 = 0.23$
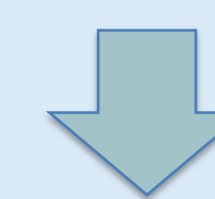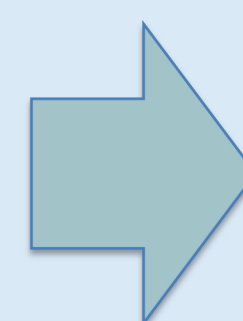
Microaggression: Qualitative Analysis
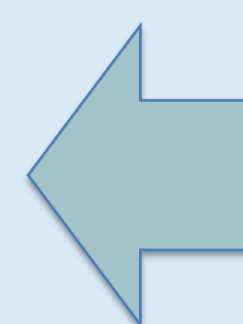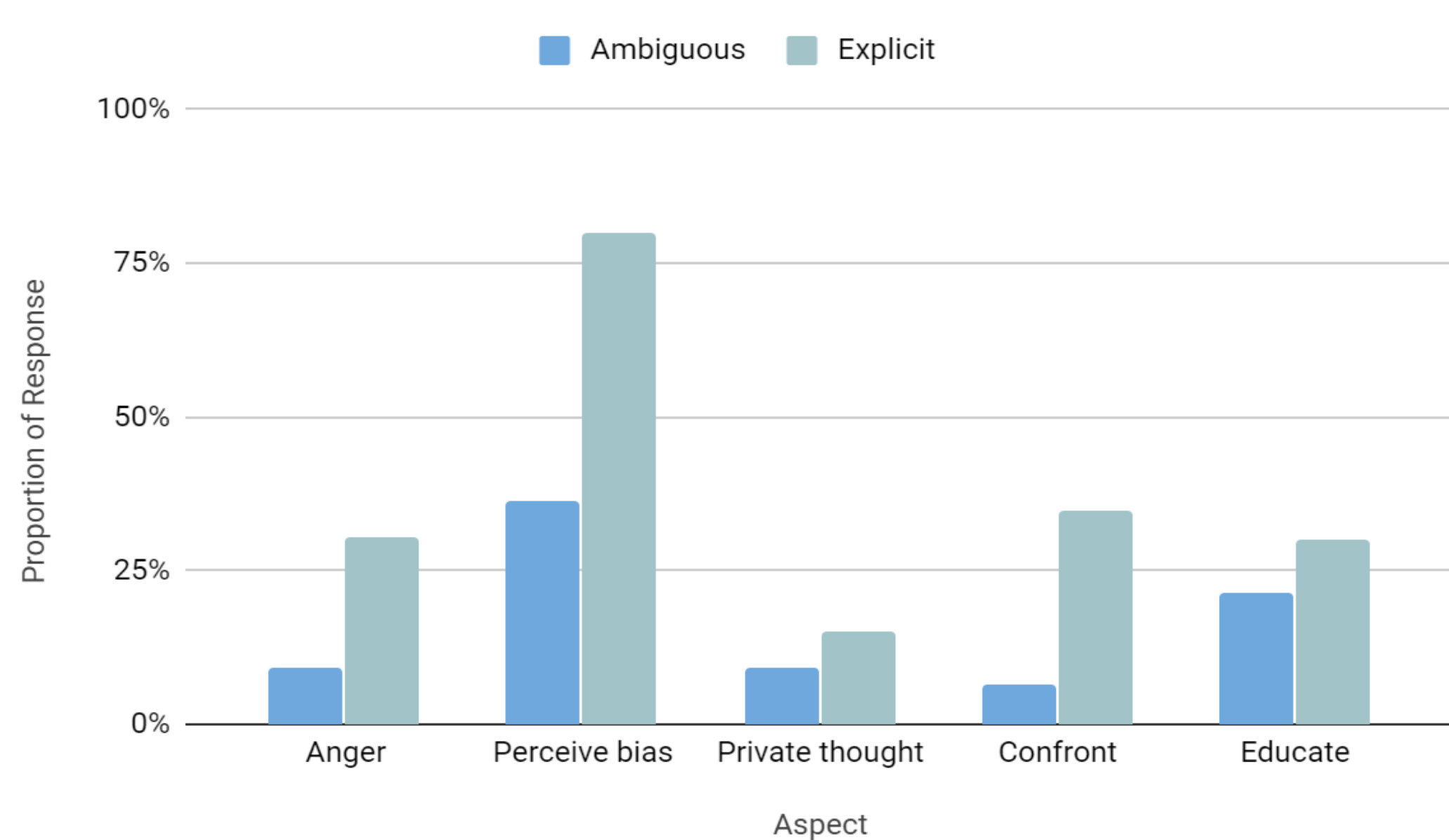
Microaggression: Salience X Tone
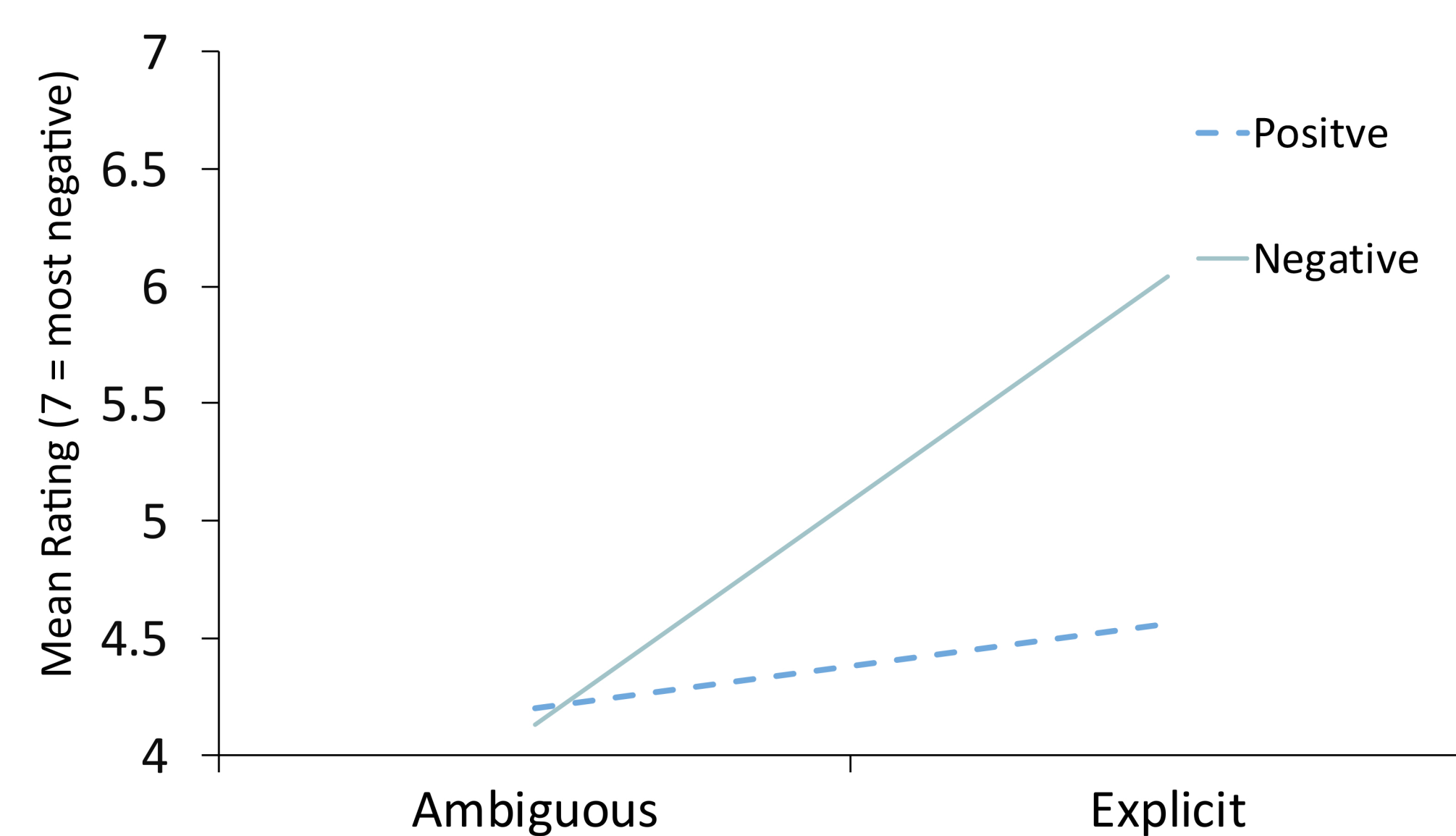
Conclusion

Some multicultural identification strategy (i.e., compartmentalization) may be worse than others for mental health. Multicultural youths are sensitive and reacted differently to the different types of microaggressions. The qualitative results further suggested that there are other factors, such as social desirability and disposition, that may have contributed to a person's way of responding.

Extension are underway to explore the relationship between multicultural identification strategies, resilience, and reaction to microaggressions, as well as to include other multicultural populations such as Latin Americans.

Citations

1: Yampolsky, M.A., Amiot, C.E., & de la Sablonniere, R. (2015). The multicultural identity integration scale (MULTIIS): Developing a comprehensive measure for configuring one's multiple cultural identities within the self. *Journal of Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology, 22*(2), 166-184.

2: Smith, B.W., Dalen, J., Wiggins, K., Tooley, E., Christopher, P., & Bernard, J. (2008). The Brief Resilience Scale: Assessing the ability to bounce back. *International Journal of Behavioral Medicine, 15*, 194-200.

3: Sue, D.W., Capodilupo, C.M., Torino, G.C., Bucceri, J.M., Holder, A.M.B., Nadal, K.L., & Esquilin, M., (2007). Racial microaggression in everyday life. *American Psychologist, 62*(4), 271-286.