

Latina/o Adolescents' Perceived Supportive Family Relationships and Internalizing Symptoms: Examination of Bidirectional Effects

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Latino/a Families

- Family members support adolescent psychosocial adjustment (Simpson, Vannucci, & Ohannessian, 2018)
- Latino/a cultural values around the family (e.g. familism) may magnify the protective features of the family for Latino/a adolescents (Stein et al., 2014)



Internalizing Symptoms

- Internalizing symptoms increase in adolescence (Graber & Sontag, 2009)
- Anxiety and depressive symptoms are a particular concern for Latino/a youth in the U.S. (Anderson & Mayes, 2010)
 - Stresses related to minority status & acculturation (Lawton & Gerdes, 2014)
 - Cultural values around emotions and social dynamics (Varela & Hensley-Maloney, 2009)
- Gender differences (Smokowski et al., 2014)



Gender & the Family

- Evidence suggests that adolescent girls may be more sensitive to some family-driven effects than boys (Updegraff, Delgado, & Wheeler, 2009)
- However, there may be important parent gender differences at work as well (Suizzo et al., 2017)
 - The role of fathers in Latino/a families (García, Manongdo, & Ozechowski, 2014)



Latino/a Families and Internalizing Symptoms

- Relational Developmental Systems Theories highlight mutual contextual influences between adolescents and their families (Overton, 2015)
- For adolescents, the protective features of the family may be eroded over time by adolescent internalizing symptoms (Russell, Simpson, Flannery, & Ohannessian, 2017)
- Dearth of research examining reciprocal relationships over time for Latino/a families and adolescent internalizing symptoms (Fanti, Henrich, Brookmeyer, & Kuperminc, 2008)

The Present Study

Study aims

- 1) to examine bidirectional associations between supportive family relationships and adolescent internalizing symptoms over time in a sample of Latino/a adolescents
- 2) to examine parent and adolescent gender differences
 - a. Girls' sensitivity
 - b. Role of fathers

Method: Participants

- Part of a larger longitudinal study of early adolescent internalizing symptoms (N =1,345)
- The PANDA Project (Predictors of Anxiety and Depression in Adolescence)
www.pandaresearchproject.org
- N = 340 Latina/o adolescents attending public middle schools in Connecticut and Massachusetts
- Mean age at T1 = 13.15, SD =.79 years
- 51% girls

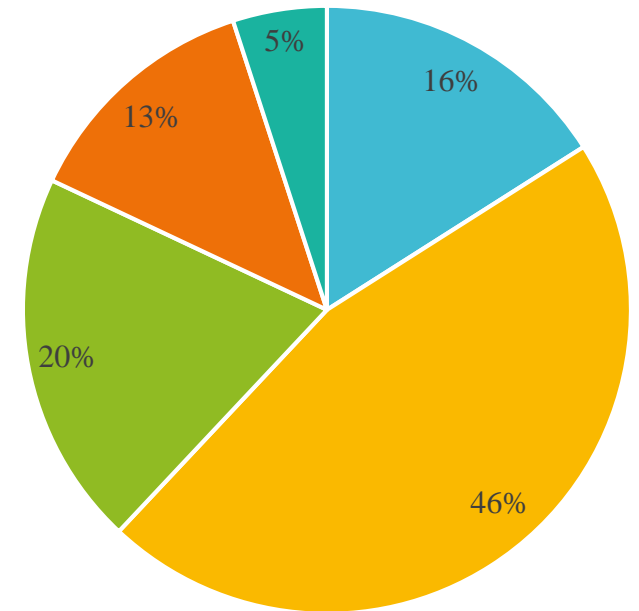


Method: Participant Families

Adolescents lived with:

- 90% with biological mothers
- 42% with biological fathers
- 2% with a step mother
- 25% with step father
- 7% with grandmother
- 4% with grandfather
- 50% with 1+ sisters
- 51% with 1+ brothers

Average Parent Education



- Elementary or Middle School
- High School or GED
- Two Year College or Trade School
- Four Year College

Method: Supportive Family Relationships Measures

Measure	Example Item	Internal Consistency
Open Communication subscale of the Parent-Adolescent Communication Scale (PACS; Barnes & Olson, 2003)	“My mother/father is always a good listener.”	$\alpha=.93$ for mothers, $\alpha=.94$ for fathers
Family subscale of the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS; Cheng & Chan, 2004)	“I get the emotional help and support I need from my family.”	$\alpha=.90$

Method: Internalizing Symptom Measures

Measure	Example Item	Internal Consistency
The Screen for Childhood Anxiety Related Disorders (SCARED; Birmaher et al., 1999)	“I am nervous.”	$\alpha=.95$
The Center for Epidemiological Studies Depression Scale for Children (CES-DC; Weissman et al., 1980)	“I felt down and unhappy.”	$\alpha=.90$

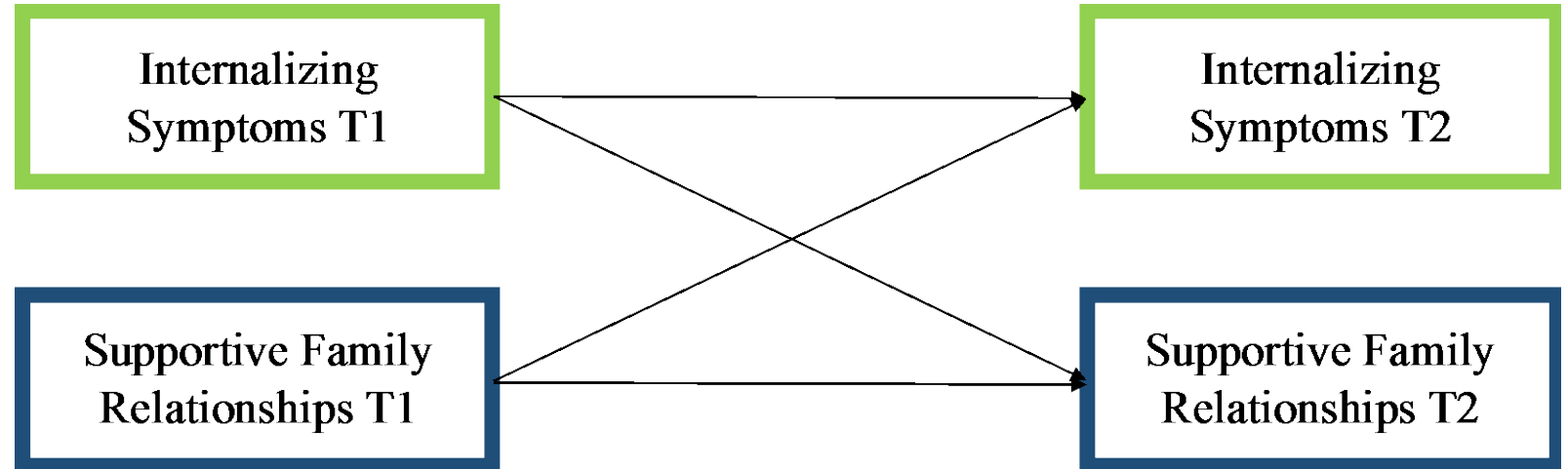
Method: Procedures

- Passive parental consent and adolescent assent obtained
- Surveys administered by trained research personnel
- Data collection during fall 2016 and spring 2017
- Surveys took ~ 1 hour to complete
- Students received a movie voucher for a local theater

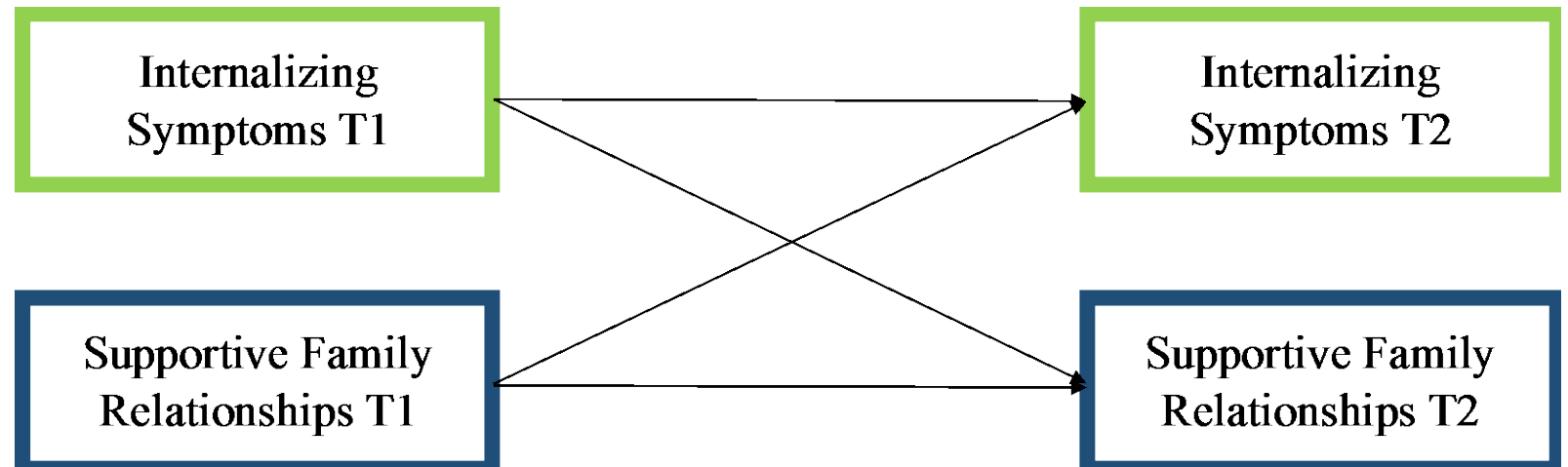


Analytic Plan: Multiple Group Path Analysis By Gender

Panel Model for Boys



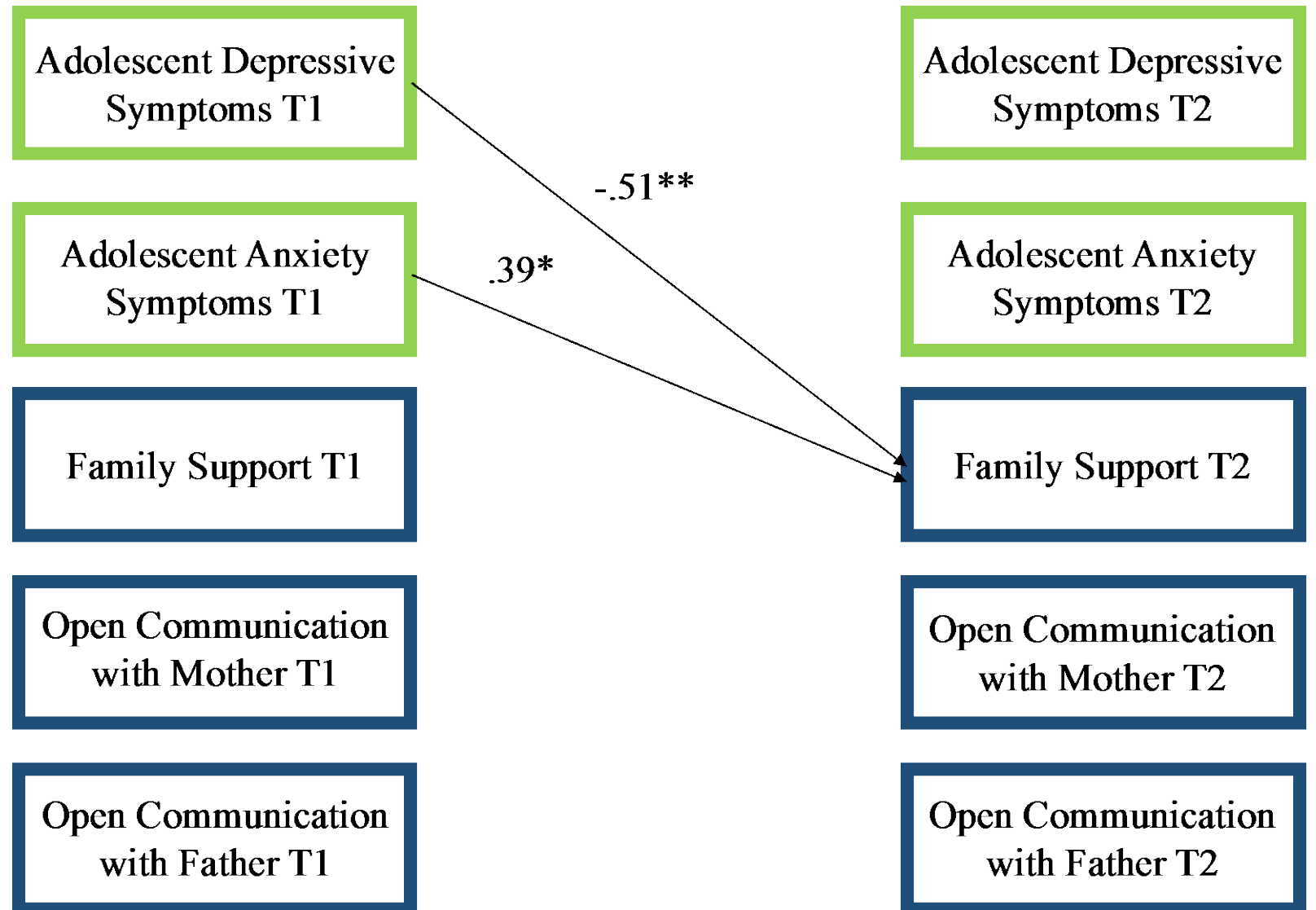
Panel Model for Girls



Evidence for Adolescent Gender Differences?

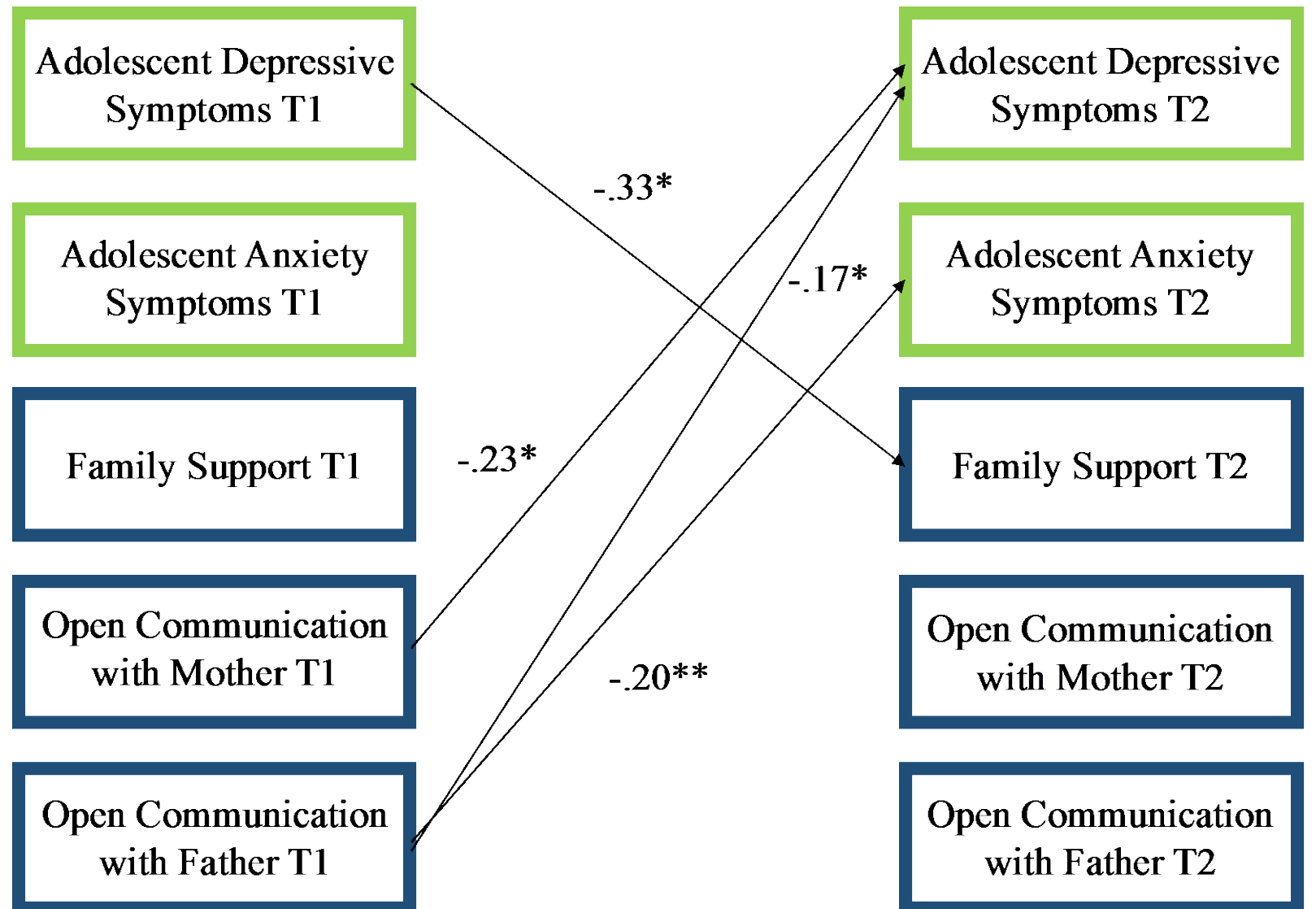
- Analyses controlled for adolescent age and mean parent education
- Model fit: $\chi^2(2) = 3.20, p > .05, RMSEA = .04, CFI = 1.00, SRMR = .02$
- Compared model fit for unconstrained model in relation to model with loadings constrained across girls and boys
- Significant Chi Square Difference Test
- Change in CFI $>.01$
- Evidence that paths are different for girls and boys

Results: Boys



Model fit: $\chi^2(9) = 11.95, p > .05$, RMSEA = .04, CFI = 1.00, SRMR = .03. Analyses controlled for adolescent age and mean parent education. Only significant non-stability paths are depicted.

Results: Girls



Model fit: $\chi^2(9) = 11.95, p > .05$, RMSEA = .04, CFI = 1.00, SRMR = .03. Analyses controlled for adolescent age and mean parent education. Only significant non-stability paths are depicted.

Implications

- Findings:
 - Replicated gender differences in family-driven effects on adolescent psychosocial adjustment for Latino/a youth
 - Underscored the role of father-adolescent daughter relationships for Latino/a girls' internalizing symptoms
- Evidence of bidirectional relationships suggest role of feedback loops



Conclusions

- Supportive family relationships are important for Latino/a youth's psychosocial development
- But, the quality of that support may be impacted by earlier youth internalizing symptoms



Thank you

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