

Environmental Adversity on Children's Self-Worth: Evaluating the Protective Effects of Ethnic Identity

Karen Ahumada Villanueva & Dr. Kristen Rudd | University of Colorado Colorado Springs



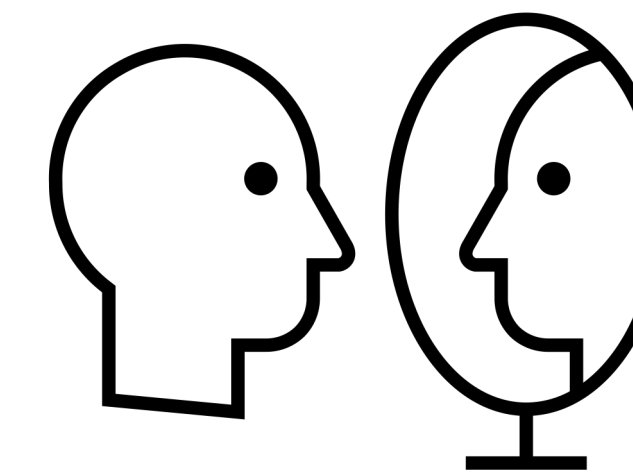
INTRODUCTION:

- Ethnic-Racial Identity is an individual's identification with a particular ethnic or racial group (ERI).
- Self-esteem (S-E) is an important factor in psychopathology outcomes that evolves over time and is influenced by social factors (Cvencek, 2016).
- Environmental adversity (e.g., poverty, overcrowding, and homelessness), may impact psychological and emotional well-being including long-term challenges in self-regulation and mental health (Copeland-Linder et al., 2010).
- Having a strong sense of ERI may serve as a protective factor against the negative impacts of environmental adversity on S-E, as it may be similar to having a positive sense of self, which has been linked with resilience (Copeland-Linder et al., 2010).
- Previous research has shown that environmental adversity such as poverty, overcrowding, and homelessness, can negatively impact children's psychological outcomes, including S-E. However, less is understood about how ERI can buffer these effects (Blair & Raver, 2012).



HYPOTHESIS:

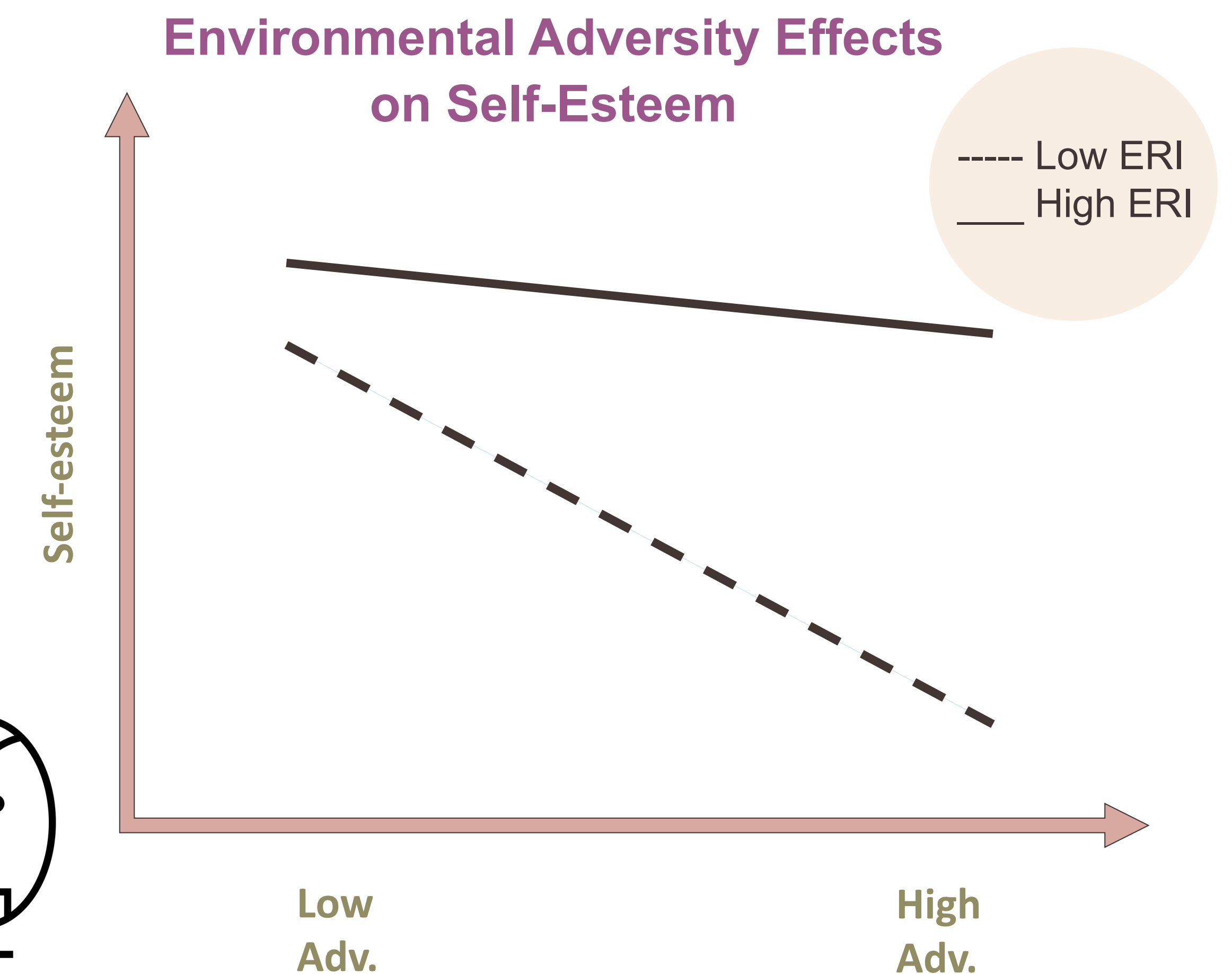
- We hypothesize that early childhood exposure to environmental adversity will negatively impact S-E, with the effect being stronger for children from minority ethnic-racial groups with lower ERI scores.
- Specifically, children with higher levels of ERI that are exposed to adversity will have better S-E than low ERI high adversity kids.



METHOD:

- Sample of 175 minority children (Latine, Black, Multiracial), 50% female, from subset of the ChiRRP data (Yates, 2024).
- Self-esteem was reported by children using the HARTER (Harter, 2018) assessment at age 10.
- Child-reports of ERI were collected at age 8 using the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure-Revised Version (MEIM-R; Phinney & Ong, 2007).
- Environmental adversity (e.g., poverty, overcrowding, high residential mobility, homelessness, etc.) will be a cumulative score for exposure to environmental adversity reported by parents from birth to age 6.

EXPECTED RESULTS:



DISCUSSION:

We hope the findings have implications for understanding how cultural factors, ethnic-racial identity, can shape the psychological well-being of children growing up in adverse environments, providing insight for intervention and support strategies for minority families facing environmental hardship.



REFERENCES:

- Blair, C., & Raver, C.C. (2012). Child development in the context of adversity: Experiential canalization of brain and behavior. *American Psychologist*, 67(4), 309–318. <https://doi-org.proxy.lib.umich.edu/10.1037/a0027493>.
- Copeland-Linder, N., Lambert, S. F., & Ialongo, N.S. (2010). Community violence, protective factors, and adolescent mental health: A profile analysis. *Journal of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology*, 39(2), 176–186. <https://doi-org.uccs.idm.oclc.org/10.1080/15374410903532601>.
- Cvencek, D., Greenwald, A.G., & Meltzoff, A.N. (2016). Implicit measures for preschool children confirm self-esteem's role in maintaining a balanced identity. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*. San Diego: Elsevier Inc.
- Harter, S. (2018). *Self-Perceptions*. Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Herrington, H. M., Smith, T. B., Feinauer, E., & Griner, D. (2016). Reliability generalization of the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure-Revised (MEIM-R). *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 63(5), 586–593. <https://doi.org/10.1037/cou0000148>.
- Yates, T. (2024). "Child Representation & Regulation Project (ChiRRP)" [Data Set]. Adversity and adaptation lab. University of California, Riverside. <https://adlab.ucr.edu/current-projects/>.
- Serimin, S., Osler, G., Pozzoli, T., & Moscardino, U. (2018). Early adversities, family support, and child well-being: The moderating role of environmental sensitivity. *Child: care, health & development*. England: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.