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Ethnic Discrimination, Sexism, And Depression Among Latinx Women: The Roles of Anxiety Sensitivity and Expressive Suppression

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Abstract

Latinx women are twice as likely to experience depression compared to Latinx men. Latinx women are also subjected to heightened stress in the form of ethnic and sexist discrimination. Limited research has sought to explore variables that may have explanatory roles between discrimination and mental health outcomes among women of color. The current study tested whether anxiety sensitivity and expressive suppression uniquely link discrimination and depression for Latinx women. This cross-sectional study included 246 Latinx women primarily of Mexican descent ($n = 173$) recruited from community events and Mechanical Turk. On average, participants were 36.29 years old ($SD = 12.61$,

range = 18–72). Participants completed several self-report measures on ethnic discrimination (Brief Perceived Ethnic Discrimination Questionnaire), sexism (Schedule of Sexist Events), anxiety sensitivity (Anxiety Sensitivity Index-3), expressive suppression (Emotion Regulation Questionnaire—Suppression), and depression (Brief Center for Epidemiologic Studies—Depression). Using the PROCESS macro (Hayes, 2013), two parallel mediation analyses examined whether discrimination had an indirect effect via anxiety sensitivity and expressive suppression on depression. Anxiety sensitivity (indirect effect = .65, $SE = .24$, 95% CI [.21, 1.15]) and expressive suppression (indirect effect = .25, $SE = .13$, 95% CI [.07, .56]) uniquely linked ethnic discrimination and depression. Anxiety sensitivity (indirect effect = .66, $SE = .21$, 95% CI [.29, 1.13]) uniquely linked sexist discrimination and depression symptoms, while expressive suppression did not (indirect effect = .13, $SE = .10$, 95% CI [–.001, .40]). Anxiety sensitivity linked both ethnic and sexist discrimination with depression; however, expressive suppression only linked ethnic discrimination and depression. Evidence suggests that there are different links to depression depending on the type of discrimination for Latinx women.

Keywords:

Latinx, ethnic discrimination, sexism, anxiety sensitivity, expressive suppression

Major depressive disorder affects approximately 9% of adults in the United States annually. In fact, it is estimated that almost one fifth of adults in the United States will experience depression at least once in their life (Kessler et al., 2005). Furthermore, women across racial and ethnic minority groups, including Latinx women (Alegría et al., 2007), have at least doubled rates of major depressive disorder compared to men (Kessler et al., 2005). One theory proposes that women experience these elevated rates due to increased life stress, such as sexism, or the unequal treatment of women (Klonoff & Landrine, 1995). Women of color experience not only sexism but also ethnic discrimination. Despite being the largest ethnic minority group in the United States (U.S. Census Bureau, 2016), few studies have explored how ethnic and sexist discrimination relate to depression among Latinx women.

Empirical research consistently links discrimination to numerous psychological consequences, including depression (Jones, Peddie, Gilrane, King, & Gray, 2016). Still, work is needed to clarify the pathways in which ethnic discrimination and sexism contribute to depression. Informed by the stress and coping framework, Pascoe and Smart Richman (2009) purported that the pathways that link discrimination to poor mental health outcomes, such as depression, include heightened emotional stress responses. Traditionally, these models have been critical in identifying the potential constructs and vulnerabilities underlying the relationship between cultural stressors and psychological health (Chun, Moos, & Cronkite, 2006; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). As such, empirical work has highlighted the role of *anxiety sensitivity*, or one's heightened awareness and negative interpretation of autonomic arousal (Reiss, Peterson, Gursky, & McNally, 1986), and *expressive suppression*, or inhibiting expression of emotion (Gross, 1998), as key mechanisms that contribute to negative mental health outcomes (Zvolensky et al., 2019). Still, the relative function of stress responses in changing psychological health is dependent on cultural context and environment (Driscoll & Torres, 2013). As such, expressive suppression and anxiety sensitivity may be particularly salient among Latinx women given that they are, typically, socialized in a culture that emphasizes emotional restraint of negative emotions through prescribed

gender norms (Castillo, Perez, Castillo, & Ghosheh, 2010; Varela, Weems, Berman, Hensley, & de Bernal, 2007). Moreover, while recent research continues to uncover the physiological and psychological pathways that link discrimination to depression, very limited research has evaluated these unique pathways among Latinx *women* (Pascoe & Smart Richman, 2009). In sum, the current study examined whether anxiety sensitivity and expressive suppression indirectly relate to discrimination and depression among Latinx women.

Discrimination Predicts Depression

To review, discrimination has been deemed an uncontrollable and unpredictable stressor that exacerbates negative health outcomes (Pascoe & Smart Richman, 2009). Latinx women may experience both ethnic discrimination and sexism. Some studies cite that 50% to 75% of Latinx individuals experience ethnic discrimination at least once in their lifetime (Arellano-Morales et al., 2015; Pew Research Center, 2016). Meta-analyses and systematic reviews have overwhelmingly shown that ethnic discrimination is associated with poor mental and physical health outcomes across cross-sectional and longitudinal studies (Benner et al., 2018; Lee & Ahn, 2012; T. T. Lewis, Cogburn, & Williams, 2015; Paradies et al., 2015). Some of this work has noted that this relationship appears more robust among Latinxs when compared to other ethnic groups (Paradies et al., 2015). Similarly, cross-sectional data supports that discrimination predicts depression among young Latinx women (Cheng, Hitter, Adams, & Williams, 2016) and sexual minority Latinx immigrant women (Cerezo, 2016).

Sexism may include day-to-day experiences, such as being overlooked, or institutional sexism, such as sexual harassment and unequal treatment (Klonoff & Landrine, 1995). Unfortunately, the research on sexism often overlooks women of color, especially Latinx women. For example, Moradi and DeBlaere (2010) found that only 1% of the sexism literature included the terms “Hispanic,” “Hispanic American,” “Latina,” or “Latin.” Women of color have reported more recent and lifetime sexist events than non-Hispanic White women, with these experiences occurring among personal relationships with men, both within and outside their cultural group, and among family members (Klonoff & Landrine, 1995). Much like ethnic discrimination, sexist events have been shown to predict depression symptoms above and beyond daily- and major-life stressors (Belle & Doucet, 2003; Klonoff, Landrine, & Campbell, 2000). While there is substantial evidence that supports discriminatory experiences are linked to elevated depression, limited research has explored variables that may have explanatory relevance among Latinx women recruited from community samples.

Mediation Pathways to Depression

Within a stress and coping framework, Pascoe and Smart Richman (2009) postulated that experiences of discrimination are related to stress responses, which in turn contribute to elevated psychological distress, such as depression symptoms. Stress responses may be psychological, physiological, or “mental states caused by stress” (Pascoe & Smart Richman, 2009, p. 22). Indeed, there has been recent attention focusing on underlying mechanisms, or mediators, that shape poor mental health outcomes (Dozois, Seeds, & Collins, 2009; National Institute of Mental Health [NIMH], 2019) Furthermore, these pathways may differ for men versus women, necessitating further research to better understand the process by which discriminatory experiences are associated with poor mental health outcomes among women of color (NIMH, 2019; Pascoe & Smart Richman, 2009). The current study examined anxiety

sensitivity and expressive suppression as emotional stress responses that may link the relationship between discrimination and depression.

Anxiety Sensitivity

Anxiety sensitivity, or the fearfulness of anxious and somatic symptoms, has been suggested as a potential mechanism that explains the relationship between stress and depression (Naragon-Gainey & Watson, 2018). Anxiety sensitivity and anxiety are separate constructs (Reiss et al., 1986): anxiety sensitivity is fear of symptoms and corresponding consequences, whereas anxiety refers to the symptoms of anxiety, such as feeling restless or rapid heartbeat (McNally, 1989; Olatunji & Wolitzky-Taylor, 2009). Anxiety sensitivity is thought to be a relatively stable, yet somewhat malleable, factor that is influenced by both genetic predisposition and social upbringing (Taylor, Jang, Stewart, & Stein, 2008). In fact, it is estimated that Latinx individuals may report higher anxiety sensitivity (Piña & Silverman, 2004; Weems, Hayward, Killen, & Taylor, 2002) as well as generally higher sensitivity to somatic sensations (Varela et al., 2007) than non-Hispanic White individuals. Some work has suggested that traditional gender roles may contribute to anxiety sensitivity such that the importance placed on restraining one's negative emotions to maintain harmony, a pillar of *marianismo*, may be associated with one's fear of experiencing autonomic arousal (Castillo et al., 2010; Viana et al., 2017). Despite evidence that women frequently report higher anxiety sensitivity than men in general populations (Stewart, Taylor, & Baker, 1997) and the increasing research that anxiety sensitivity is relevant to Latinx populations, few researchers have examined how the pathway of discrimination to depression via anxiety sensitivity holds among Latinx women.

Longitudinal studies have shown that anxiety sensitivity is a significant mediator of the relationship between life stressors and negative affect (McLaughlin & Hatzenbuehler, 2009; Zavoos et al., 2012). Furthermore, anxiety sensitivity has been found to function as a mediator between several cultural stressors, including acculturative stress (Bakhshae et al., 2018; Jardín et al., 2018), ethnic discrimination (Zvolensky et al., 2019), and subjective social status (Zvolensky et al., 2015) and depression among Latinx samples. Again, limited studies have tested whether these findings hold among Latinx women while including their experiences of sexism. Regardless, it seems that experiences of stress, especially those that are uncontrollable and unpredictable, may be associated with anxiety sensitivity, increasing an individual's fear that their symptoms may have significant physical, mental, and social ramifications.

While anxiety sensitivity was initially studied as a risk factor for anxiety symptoms, researchers currently conceptualize anxiety sensitivity as an underlying mechanism for development of both anxiety and mood disorders among women (Olatunji & Wolitzky-Taylor, 2009). Notably, one meta-analysis found that anxiety sensitivity was moderately related to depression symptoms. Specifically, dysphoria, suicidality, and changes in sleep were depressive symptoms connected with anxiety sensitivity (Naragon-Gainey, 2010). Even among Latinx individuals (Jardín et al., 2018; Velasco et al., 2016; Zvolensky et al., 2015) and Latinx adolescents (Varela et al., 2007), anxiety sensitivity has predicted depressive symptoms. Again, no studies have closely examined this pathway among Latinx women.

Expressive Suppression

Expressive suppression is an emotion regulation strategy where one inhibits their emotional and behavioral response to a situation. Though, despite the notion that individuals are suppressing their outward emotional response during a stressor, research demonstrates that they still experience internal changes, including activation of the sympathetic nervous system (Goldin, McRae, Ramel, & Gross, 2008). Ehring, Tuschen-Caffier, Schnülle, Fischer, and Gross (2010) found evidence that individuals vulnerable to depressive symptoms were more likely to spontaneously use expressive suppression in response to stress. To the authors' knowledge, no studies have explored expressive suppression among Latinx women. However, a review found that women use expressive suppression at a similar rate to men, and in fact, women are more likely to use expressive suppression as they get older (Nolen-Hoeksema & Aldao, 2011). Due to aspects of *marianismo*, namely silencing the self to maintain harmony and subordination to others (Castillo et al., 2010), Latinx women may have a propensity to suppress thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. Consistent with this idea, Morelen and Thomassin (2013) reviewed that Latinx individuals may be socialized to emotionally suppress in order to maintain harmony, especially within familial relationships.

Empirical studies suggest that the pathway by which discrimination contributes to depression may include expressive suppression. For instance, daily diary studies support that expressive suppression is a common response after discrimination (Hatzenbuehler, Nolen-Hoeksema, & Dovidio, 2009) and may be particularly relevant for people of color as this response may be a better fit for their environmental context, which may not facilitate more active ways of regulating emotion (Gross & John, 2003). Still, mixed findings have been noted when examining expressive suppression in the context of ethnic discrimination. For instance, some evidence suggests that expressive suppression may be protective: among Mexican American adolescents, anger suppression buffered negative outcomes in the context of ethnic discrimination (Park, Wang, Williams, & Alegría, 2017). On the other hand, some empirical research indicated that little to no relationship exists between discrimination and expressive suppression among Latinx and Asian American individuals (Armenta et al., 2013). Finally, a bulk of empirical evidence points to a positive association between expressive suppression and distress (Brondolo, Brady Ver Halen, Pencille, Beatty, & Contrada, 2009; Juang et al., 2016). Minimal studies have examined expressive suppression in response to sexism even though some researchers suggest that expressive suppression is a more common response to day-to-day sexist events (Johnson, Mitchell, Bean, Richeson, & Shelton, 2010). Overall, additional research is needed to determine the role of expressive suppression for Latinx women in the context of discriminatory events.

Expressive suppression has been linked to psychopathology, especially depression (Aldao, Nolen-Hoeksema, & Schweizer, 2010). Seminal findings revealed that individuals who used expressive suppression were less likely to tell others in their life about their positive or negative emotional experiences and reported more depression and less general life satisfaction (Gross & John, 2003). Even among patients that endorsed clinical levels of depression, expressive suppression was linked to exacerbated symptoms (Beblo et al., 2012). Indeed, longitudinal studies confirm that the use of suppression tendencies predict depression symptoms months later (Aldao et al., 2010). As an example, a daily diary study found that when high levels of day-to-day stressors occurred, individuals that endorsed expressive suppression tendencies also reported lower positive emotionality (Richardson, 2017). In sum, expressive suppression likely contributes to depressive symptoms.

Current Study

The current study explored the roles of anxiety sensitivity and expressive suppression in association with discrimination and depression symptoms among Latinx women. This cross-sectional work extends previous research stipulating that two emotional stress responses uniquely link discrimination and negative mental health outcomes (Pascoe & Smart Richman, 2009). The first hypothesis anticipated that there would be an indirect effect of ethnic discrimination on depression via anxiety sensitivity and expressive suppression. Similarly, the second hypothesis indicated that there would be an indirect effect of sexism on depression via anxiety sensitivity and expressive suppression.

Method

Sample

Participants included 246 Latinx women ($M_{age} = 36.29$, $SD_{age} = 12.61$, range = 18–72) who were recruited in person from community festivals in a moderately sized city located in the Midwest ($n = 147$) and online ($n = 99$). Most of the women identified as being of Mexican heritage (70%; $n = 173$), followed by Puerto Rican (13%; $n = 33$) and Central/South American (11%; $n = 26$). Additionally, more than half (62%; $n = 152$) were born in the United States. For those that were born outside of the United States. (38%; $n = 93$), participants reported living in the United States for an average of 31 years. Almost half of the sample indicated having an annual household income between \$20,000 and \$50,000 ($n = 112$). The remainder of the sample endorsed an annual income of over \$50,000 (37%, $n = 91$) and less than \$20,000 (16%; $n = 39$).

Procedure

Community festival

Researchers received approval from the institution's affiliated review board. Participants were recruited from cultural events in person. Informed consent was provided verbally, responses were anonymous, and participants were compensated with \$10.

Mechanical Turk

The institution's affiliated review board approved the online survey via Amazon Mechanical Turk, an online recruitment source. The advertisement on Mechanical Turk described a questionnaire on Latinx cultural experiences in the United States. Only participants that lived in the United States and identified as Latinx/Hispanic were eligible to complete the survey. Informed consent was provided online, responses were anonymous, and participants were compensated with \$10.

Materials

Brief Perceived Ethnic Discrimination Questionnaire (B-PEDQ)

The B-PEDQ (Brondolo et al., 2005) is a 17-item questionnaire that assesses frequency of lifetime discriminatory events. It was validated with a community sample of Latinx individuals (Brondolo et al., 2005). Sample items include "Because of your ethnicity, how often have you been treated unfairly by teachers, principals, or other staff at school?" and "Because of your ethnicity, how often have others hinted that you are dishonest or can't be trusted?" Participants respond on a scale from 1 (*never*) to 5 (*very often*). A mean score is calculated, with higher scores indicating higher reported frequency of ethnic discriminatory events. A previous study used this scale with U.S. Latinx individuals and had a

Cronbach's alpha of .88 (Arellano-Morales et al., 2015). Similarly, the Cronbach's alpha in the current study was .92.

Schedule of Sexist Events (SSE)

The SSE (Klonoff & Landrine, 1995) is a 20-item questionnaire that examines frequency of sexist events in the past year. The development and validation of this measure contained a diverse group of women recruited from college and community sources. Sample items include "How many times have you been treated unfairly by teachers or professors because you are a woman?" and "How many times have you wanted to tell someone off for being sexist?" Participants reply on a scale from 1 (*never*) to 6 (*all of the time [more than 70% of the time]*). A mean score is calculated. DeBlare and Bertsch (2013) used this measure with diverse college women and reported a Cronbach's alpha of .94. The Cronbach's alpha in the current study was .95.

Anxiety Sensitivity Index-3 (ASI-3)

The ASI-3 (Taylor et al., 2007) is an 18-item self-report measure that examines how one habitually perceives their own anxious bodily sensations or behaviors. As an example, participants are given the item "It is important for me not to appear nervous" and asked to respond how much they agree from 0 (*very little*) to 4 (*very much*). The current study used the total anxiety sensitivity score, which ranges from 0 to 72, such that higher scores indicate higher anxiety sensitivity. A previous study used this scale with a community sample of Latinx adults and reported a Cronbach's alpha of .96 (Torres & Mata-Greve, 2017). The current study had a Cronbach's alpha of .94.

Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ) expressive suppression subscale

The ERQ (Gross & John, 2003) is a 10-item self-report measure that examines an individual's emotion regulation preferences over their lifetime. Six questions target cognitive reappraisal, and four items target expressive suppression. The current study used the expressive suppression subscale. Participants are provided with a statement, such as "I keep my emotions to myself," and rate how true the statement is on a scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). A mean score is taken such that higher scores indicate higher use of suppression. Juang and colleagues (2016) used this subscale with a group of Latinx college students, where they had a Cronbach's alpha of .83. The current study had a Cronbach's alpha of .70.

Brief Center for Epidemiologic Studies—Depression scale (B-CES-D)

The B-CES-D (Kohout, Berkman, Evans, & Cornoni-Huntley, 1993) is a 10-item measure assessing depression symptoms over the past week. Participants are given an item (e.g., "I had trouble keeping my mind on what I was doing") and indicate how often they have experienced that symptom from 0 (*rarely or none of the time [less than one day]*) to 3 (*most or all of the time [5–7 days]*). Summed scores range from 0 to 30, with higher scores indicating increased symptoms. The B-CES-D has been previously used with a U.S. Latinx population with a Cronbach's alpha of .76 (Grzywacz, Hovey, Seligman, Arcury, & Quandt, 2006). The current study had a Cronbach's alpha of .84.

Data Analytic Plan

The main analyses included parallel mediation, which tests multiple mediators simultaneously and accounts for covariates, making it more representative of real-world experiences (Hayes, 2013). Mediation is typically used when examining potential mechanisms (Hayes, Montoya, & Rockwood,

2017). Mediation, or in this case indirect effects, were examined via bootstrapping, a resampling technique that has been shown to reduce Type I error rates. With 1,000 iterations of bootstrapping, 95% confidence intervals were calculated for the indirect effects. Statistical significance was determined if the confidence intervals did not include zero.

Results

Preliminary Analyses

Means, standard deviations, and correlations of the variables of interest are shown in Table 1. Ethnic and sexist discrimination were highly positively correlated. As a whole, the sample reported a mean depression score slightly lower than a previously established clinical cutoff of 10 (Andresen, Malmgren, Carter, & Patrick, 1994). Mean differences of variables of interest were assessed by nativity status, income, source of sample (e.g., community event or online), and language. Independent *t* tests evaluated the differences between U.S.- and foreign-born Latinx women. Foreign-born Latinx women ($M = 1.80, SD = .83$) reported fewer sexist events than their U.S.-born counterparts ($M = 2.40, SD = .93$), $t(238) = -5.03, p < .01$. Those that completed the survey in English ($M = 2.31, SD = .92$) endorsed more sexist events than those that completed the survey in Spanish ($M = 1.61, SD = .79$), $t(240) = 4.77, p < .01$.

Table 1. Correlations, Means, and Standard Deviations of Variables of Interest

Variables	1	2	3	4	5
1. Ethnic discrimination	—	.63**	.17**	.20**	.37**
2. Sexist discrimination		—	.21**	.15**	.39**
3. Anxiety sensitivity			—	.26**	.54**
4. Expressive suppression				—	.33**
5. Depression symptoms					—
<i>M</i>	1.87	2.18	21.85	3.75	9.03
<i>SD</i>	.70	.94	16.03	1.38	5.91

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

There were minimal differences between the samples recruited from community events and Mechanical Turk. As an exception, those that completed the survey on Mechanical Turk ($M = 2.34, SD = .91$) reported more sexist events than those that completed the survey at a community event ($M = 2.06, SD = .95$), $t(240) = -2.34, p < .05$. The sample recruited from Mechanical Turk was significantly younger, more likely to be born in the United States, less likely to be Mexican, and less likely to be foreign born compared to the sample recruited from the community event.

One-way analyses of variance were used to examine differences among low (less than \$19,999), middle (between \$20,000 and \$49,999), and high (more than \$50,000) income groups. Income was related to anxiety sensitivity and depression, $F(2, 238) = 5.81, p = .003$, and $F(2, 236) = 9.14, p < .001$, respectively. Participants from the low income bracket reported higher anxiety sensitivity ($MASI-3 = 29.05, SDASI-3 = 16.79$) and depression ($MBCES-D = 12.29, SDBCES-D = 6.60$) than individuals from the middle ($MASI-3 = 21.94, SDASI-3 = 16.58; MBCES-D = 8.97, SDBCES-D = 5.44$) and high income brackets ($MASI-3 = 18.79, SDASI-3 = 13.99; MBCES-D = 7.62, SDBCES-D = 5.75$). Due to the significant mean

discrepancies, nativity status, language of survey, source of sample, and income were controlled in main analyses.

Main Analyses

Hypothesis 1

The first hypothesis examined whether ethnic discrimination would be positively related to depression symptoms via anxiety sensitivity and expressive suppression. The overall model was significant, $R^2 = .41$, $F(7, 224)$, $p < .001$ (see Table 2). The estimated effect size of the total model was Cohen's $f^2 = .69$. Consistent with previous literature, the total effect of ethnic discrimination on depression was significant, meaning ethnic discrimination was directly related to higher depression symptoms, $t = 5.60$, $p < .001$. Consistent with the proposed hypothesis, ethnic discrimination was related to higher anxiety sensitivity, $t = 2.75$, $p < .01$, which was associated with increased depressive symptoms, $t = 7.68$, $p < .001$. Similarly, ethnic discrimination was related to higher expressive suppression, $t = 2.73$, $p = .01$, which was related to increased depression symptoms, $t = 3.06$, $p < .01$. In summary, Hypothesis 1 was supported. The total indirect effect of ethnic discrimination on depressive symptoms was statistically significant (effect = .90, 95% CI [.41, 1.48]). Specifically, analyses support that both expressive suppression (effect = .25, 95% CI [.07, .56]) and anxiety sensitivity (effect = .65, 95% CI [.21, 1.15]) were indirectly related to ethnic discrimination and depression symptoms. While the comparison model of indirect effects indicates that anxiety sensitivity had a greater effect than expressive suppression, the difference was not statistically significant (effect = .39, 95% CI [-.95, .13]).

Table 2. Model Summary of the Indirect Effect of Ethnic Discrimination on Depression through Anxiety Sensitivity and Expressive Suppression

	Outcome								
	M ₁ – Anxiety sensitivity			M ₂ – Expressive suppression			Y - Depression		
Predictor	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	<i>p</i>
Ethnic discrimination	4.11	1.49	.01	.36	.13	.01	2.02	.46	<.01
Anxiety sensitivity	—	—	—	—	—	—	.16	.02	<.01
Expressive suppression	—	—	—	—	—	—	.71	.23	<.01
Constant	6.15	8.30	.46	2.88	.73	<.01	1.43	2.58	.58
	$R^2 = .12$			$R^2 = .07$			$R^2 = .41$		
	$F(5, 226) = 5.93, p < .01$			$F(5, 226) = 3.18, p = .01$			$F(7, 224) = 21.86, p < .01$		

	95% Confidence interval			
Indirect effect	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	Lower limit	Upper limit
Total indirect effect	.90	.28	.41	1.48
Anxiety sensitivity	.65	.24	.21	1.15
Expressive suppression	.26	.13	.07	.56
Comparison of indirect effects				
Suppression vs. anxiety sensitivity	.39	.27	-.95	.13

Hypothesis 2

The second aim explored the roles of anxiety sensitivity and expressive suppression in the relationship between sexism and depression. The overall model was significant, $R^2 = .43$, $F(7, 224) = 23.73$, $p < .001$ (see Table 3). The estimated effect size of the total model was Cohen's $f^2 = .75$. As expected, the total effect was significant, meaning sexist discrimination significantly related to increased depression symptoms, $t = 6.93$, $p < .001$. Consistent with the proposed hypothesis, sexist discrimination was significantly related to increased anxiety sensitivity, $t = 3.98$, $p < .001$, and anxiety sensitivity was significantly related to depression symptoms, $t = 7.07$, $p < .001$. However, sexist discrimination was not significantly related to expressive suppression, $t = 1.78$, $p = .07$. Expressive suppression was associated with depression symptoms, $t = 3.30$, $p < .01$. Thus, Hypothesis 2 was partially supported. The total indirect effect of sexist discrimination on depression symptoms was statistically significant (effect = .80, 95% CI [.36, 1.32]). Upon further examination, results demonstrated that anxiety sensitivity served as an indirect effect (effect = .66, 95% CI [.29, 1.13]), while the expressive suppression pathway was approaching statistical significance (effect = .14, 95% CI [-.001, .40]). As such, the comparison indicated that the indirect effect of anxiety sensitivity was significantly larger than that of expressive suppression (effect = .52, 95% CI [-.98, -.14]).

Table 3. Model Summary of the Indirect Effect of Sexism on Depression through Anxiety Sensitivity and Expressive Suppression

Outcome	M ₁ – Anxiety Sensitivity			M ₂ – Expressive suppression			Y - Depression		
Predictor	B	SE B	P	B	SE	P	B	SE B	P
Sexism	4.57	1.15	<.01	.18	.10	.07	1.95	.36	<.01
Anxiety sensitivity	—	—	—	—	—	—	.14	.02	<.01
Expressive suppression	—	—	—	—	—	—	.75	.23	<.01
Constant	3.68	7.75	.64	3.48	.70	<.01	1.01	2.46	.68
	$R^2 = .14$			$R^2 = .05$			$R^2 = .43$		
	$F(5, 226) = 7.54, p < .01$			$F(5, 226) = 2.42, p = .04$			$F(7, 224) = 23.72, p < .01$		

	B	SE	95% Confidence interval	
Indirect effect	B	SE	Lower limit	Upper limit
Total indirect effect	.80	.25	.36	1.33
Anxiety sensitivity	.66	.21	.29	1.13
Expressive suppression	.14	.10	-.0003	.40
Comparison of indirect effects				
Suppression vs. anxiety sensitivity	.52	.22	-.98	-.14

Discussion

From a stress and coping framework, the present study sought to explore two emotional stress responses, anxiety sensitivity and expressive suppression, that may be relevant to the relationship between discrimination and depression symptoms among Latinx women. Few studies have sought to identify the pathways by which discrimination leads to depression specific to Latinx women, even though Latinx women are at twice the risk of experiencing depression symptoms compared to men. As anticipated, the first hypothesis was supported such that both anxiety sensitivity and expressive suppression were indirectly related to ethnic discrimination and depression. The second hypothesis was partially supported with evidence that anxiety sensitivity, but not expressive suppression, had an indirect effect. These findings provide insight into how the negative interpretation of physical sensations and poor emotion regulation may be associated with the psychological consequences connected with experiences of ethnic and sexist discrimination among Latinx women. The current national discourse regarding racial and gender inequality (i.e., Black Lives Matter, #MeToo Movement) has demonstrated the importance of better understanding the ways in which systemic inequities contribute to the health and well-being of those who represent traditionally marginalized groups.

In the context of both ethnic and sexist discrimination, anxiety sensitivity appears to be a critical mediator between discrimination and depression. The current findings provide further evidence that, among Latinx samples, anxiety sensitivity is associated with poor psychological health (Bakhshaie et al., 2018; Jardín et al., 2018; Viana et al., 2017; Zvolensky et al., 2019). Past work has postulated that experiences of discrimination, like other stressors, elicit a physiological or autonomic stress response (Pascoe & Smart Richman, 2009). Given that anxiety sensitivity involves a fear of physical sensations, it could be that Latinx women attribute negative meaning to the physiological reactions associated with discrimination, which may intensify psychological consequences, in this case depression symptoms. This notion has received some support, with recent studies showing that anxiety sensitivity mediated the relationship between acculturative stress (Bakhshaie et al., 2018; Jardín et al., 2018), ethnic discrimination (Zvolensky et al., 2019), and subjective social status (Zvolensky et al., 2015) to depression among Latinx samples. To our knowledge, the present study is the first to examine anxiety sensitivity in relation to sexism among Latinx women. The current findings are particularly compelling since anxiety sensitivity is thought to be a relatively stable, yet malleable, factor (Naragon-Gainey, 2010). Scholars have postulated that Latinx individuals have a higher tendency to report somatic difficulties (Varela et al., 2007), further corroborating the central role anxiety sensitivity plays in linking both ethnic and sexist discrimination to depression for Latinx women. As such, stressors rooted in ethnicity or gender can elicit a cascade of physiological and cognitive responses that contribute to mental health.

Expressive suppression served as another pathway by which ethnic discrimination is associated with depression. Thus, in the context of ethnic discrimination, restraining one's emotional response was associated with increased depressive symptoms among Latinx women. Past research has suggested that emotion regulation strategies that occur after a response from a stressor, like expressive suppression, may be less effective in managing emotions than antecedent-focused strategies or those that occur prior to the response (Naragon-Gainey, McMahan, & Chacko, 2017). In fact, previous work has suggested expressive suppression is a mechanism that may lead to depression (Ehring et al., 2010).

Recent work reported that expressive suppression loaded on an emotion regulation factor that included other strategies characterized by attempts to shift the focus from emotionally relevant information (Naragon-Gainey et al., 2017). This *disengagement* factor is thought to require minimal cognitive resources and be used for managing intense emotions (Sheppes, Scheibe, Suri, & Gross, 2011).

In the current findings, sexism did not have an indirect effect on depression via expressive suppression, although the model showed a trend toward statistical significance. This finding emphasizes that emotional stress responses may differ for Latinx women depending on the *type* of stressor. Consistent with this idea, Utsey, Ponterotto, Reynolds, and Cancelli (2000) found that African American women had different responses depending on if they were responding to individual, institutional, or cultural racism. In this case, the differences between ethnic and sexist discrimination in the ability to relate to expressive suppression may be indicative of these qualitatively distinct experiences for Latinx women. In fact, Shorter-Gooden (2004) found that African American women were more likely to use avoidant coping strategies for ethnic discrimination compared to sexism. They rationalized that because society tends to be more ethnically segregated than segregated by gender, women of color may not be able to constantly suppress responses to sexist discrimination. There is also the notion that sexism may appear ambivalent or ambiguous compared to ethnic discrimination (Swim, Aikin, Hall, & Hunter, 1995). The implementation of emotion regulation strategies is influenced by a variety of contextual factors, and as such, it is crucial to understand the fit of the strategy with the situational demands and personal goals (McMahon & Naragon-Gainey, 2019; Sheppes et al., 2011).

Another unique contribution of this study was that it incorporated both ethnic and sexist discrimination and emphasized the importance of understanding experiences of Latinx individuals living within interlocking systems of inequality (Torres, Mata-Greve, Bird, & Herrera-Hernandez, 2018). The current study used a double jeopardy approach, which states that Latinx women likely experience multiple forms of discrimination independently and simultaneously (Beal, 1970). While the double jeopardy approach has limitations (see J. A. Lewis & Grzanka, 2016 for review), it has been acknowledged as an appropriate and important starting place for research (Bowleg, 2008). Future work may consider replicating the findings of the current study by examining the intersection of ethnic and sexist discrimination for Latinx women. For example, some qualitative work has indicated that women of color often report instances of exoticization because of their race *and* ethnicity (Nadal et al., 2015). Unfortunately, there are a limited number of quantitative scales that assess the intersection of ethnic and sexist discrimination for Latinx women.

In terms of theoretical implications, the current study provides further insight into the role that both anxiety sensitivity and emotion suppression have on the mental health of Latinx women. Specifically, the main findings build on previous work (e.g., Pascoe & Smart Richman, 2009) that has identified pathways linking discrimination and mental health by exploring emotional stress responses associated with both ethnic and sexist discrimination. Clinically, both anxiety sensitivity and expressive suppression, while relatively stable constructs (Taylor et al., 2008), are still able to be modified through cognitive-behavioral therapy (e.g., Smits, Berry, Tart, & Powers, 2008). Reports have supported that treatment efforts that focus on anxiety sensitivity (Gardenswartz & Craske, 2001) and emotion suppression (Fung et al., 2019) effectively alleviate psychiatric conditions.

Limitations and Future Directions

There are several limitations of the current study that should be discussed. The correlational and cross-sectional methods of the current study hamper the ability to make causal conclusions. As such, the mediational findings must be interpreted with caution. Though, the study did use a stress and coping paradigm, suggesting discrimination is predictive of depression. Additionally, the measures assessed previous reports (over the past year) of ethnic and sexist discrimination and lifetime preferences of anxiety sensitivity and expressive suppression. The outcome of interest, depression, measured depression symptoms over the past week. The authors also sought to provide further support for the current findings by examining alternative analyses that switched the predictor and mediating variables. The only significant finding included an indirect effect of anxiety sensitivity on depression via sexist discrimination. This finding is consistent with the notion that the relationship between stressors and outcomes of mood may be bidirectional (e.g., Sechrist, Swim, & Mark, 2003). Regardless, future work is needed to replicate the main findings reported using a longitudinal study design.

Another limitation was that self-report of key variables is vulnerable to personal recall bias. Ecological momentary assessments can provide real-time data regarding frequency of discriminatory events and the responses and consequences associated with discrimination. Finally, the demographics of the current sample limit the generalizability of the results particularly given that most participants identified as Mexican/Mexican American. The Latinx community is comprised of heterogeneous groups of individuals with varying ethnic backgrounds and histories.

Future research can seek to build on the strengths of the present study. First, continued work should examine the role of additional emotion regulation strategies in the context of discrimination. Second, future studies may assess for multiple forms of discrimination, such as discrimination due to their gender identity, sexual orientation, class, and so forth. Based on the findings of the current study, the pathways may be different depending on the type of discrimination. Third, it will be important to disaggregate the components of anxiety sensitivity to better understand the key elements that are driving its conferred risk (Jardín et al., 2018). Different components of anxiety sensitivity may be more predictive of certain mental health outcomes.

Conclusion

In summary, the present study furthers research on discriminatory experiences among Latinx women. Specifically, anxiety sensitivity linked both ethnic and sexist discrimination with depression; however, expressive suppression only linked ethnic discrimination and depression. Evidence suggests that there are different links to depression depending on the type of discrimination for Latinx women.

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