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Differentiating competency from content: Parental racial socialization profiles and their associated factors

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Abstract

For Black parents, the racial socialization (RS) process represents a critical parenting practice. Although the field has historically focused on the content of parents' RS, it is also important to consider caregivers' perception of their competence to effectively teach their children to navigate their racialized world. The present study investigated patterns of RS by exploring 332 Black caregivers' report of both content and competency. Using Latent Profile Analysis (LPA), we identified three profiles of RS: *Multifaceted & More Competent* (*MMC*), *Unengaged & Moderately Competent* (*UModC*), and *Negative, Stressed, & Less Competent* (*NSLC*). Additionally, we explored the role of several previously established correlates of parental RS, including sociodemographic factors (i.e., age, gender, and socioeconomic status), caregiving status (e.g., mother, father, and aunt), and parents' race-related experiences (i.e., history of RS, racial identity, and experiences with racial discrimination). Generally, the *NSLC* profile consisted of caregivers who were younger than those in the other two profiles, while those in the *UModC* profile tended to have younger children, relatively. Interestingly, caregivers in the *UmodC* profile reported receiving significantly less RS in childhood and experienced less racial discrimination than those in the other two profiles. Numerous differences were found across profiles for dimensions of racial identity. The emergence of these varied profiles, as well as the identification of factors that

differentiated them, extends our understanding of RS and highlights the importance of considering parents' notions of feeling confident, skillful, and less stressed as they navigate such a vital developmental process for their children.

INTRODUCTION

While parental socialization of children has predominated the field of developmental psychology, racial socialization (RS) research has changed how the field understands the criticality of culturally responsive caregiving tasks for Black families (McAdoo, 2002). RS includes the implicit and explicit ways parents communicate tools for youth to appreciate the significance of being Black and how to navigate a racially divided society (Hughes et al., 2006; Stevenson, 1997). Research on RS has focused mostly on the content of parental racial messages (e.g., cultural pride and racism preparation) and multiple contextual factors (e.g., age and neighborhood) associated with various types of messages. As research on RS has begun to consider the role of competency in parental RS (Anderson, Jones, & Stevenson, 2019; Anderson & Stevenson, 2019), new questions arise as to the relationship between and relative importance of RS factors. Importantly, how might the field understand what messages Black caregivers transmit to their children *and* how competent they feel doing so? Furthermore, are there factors that distinguish caregivers' approach to RS competency that can advance the work exploring RS content? Using latent profile analysis, the current investigation seeks to address these questions with an aim of advancing the field of RS with a collective content and competency approach.

A brief overview of RS approaches

The seminal triple quandary model by Boykin and Toms (1985) articulated that Black parents are tasked with navigating three types of socialization goals: (a) cultural (i.e., values, beliefs, and behaviors unique to African Americans); (b) mainstream (i.e., values of and coexistence within the European American, middle-class culture system); and (c) minority (i.e., messages of awareness and coping styles related to being a racial minority). The next generation of RS research then conceptualized these goals through the lenses of *message content* (e.g., cultural socialization and preparation for bias) and *message quantity or frequency* (e.g., "how often in the past year?"; see Hughes et al., 2006; Lesane-Brown, 2006 for extensive reviews). Cultural socialization, or messages that emphasize cultural pride, heritage, and ancestral legacy, and preparation for bias, or messages that address and prepare children for discriminatory racial encounters (DREs), are the two most frequently used strategies by Black parents (Hughes et al., 2006). As such, the majority of empirical support related to positive youth outcomes has focused on these two message types. Promotion of mistrust, or wariness about interracial relations, and egalitarianism, or the belief that race is not a factor that will impact one's ability to succeed, are less frequently used and have equivocal findings in the literature with respect to their youth-related outcomes (Hughes et al., 2006).

This "legacy-focused" approach asks parents to recall the content and frequency of past RS communications with their children. Although it has illuminated different types of protective

messages, it has not captured the emotional challenges for parents in delivering those messages (see Stevenson, 2014 for further discussion). However, more recent theoretical and applied perspectives of RS push the field to consider how RS can improve parent and child behavioral, cognitive, and emotional coping with discriminatory stress (see Coard et al., 2004). Specifically, a new racially responsive stress and coping frame, the racial encounter coping appraisal, and socialization theory (RECAST; Anderson & Stevenson, 2019; Stevenson, 2014) call for a *literacy* approach to our understanding of RS where one's competency in stress management and skills delivery during the communication experience is crucial in the *quality* of RS comprehension and implementation.

Racial socialization competency: RECAST as a framework

RECAST postulates that the explicit and consistent delivery of psychoeducation-informed, skilled, and confident RS practices by parents can promote greater racial coping self-efficacy and racial coping behaviors in youth, altering the trajectory of psychosocial problems in relation to racial discrimination. Although general coping socialization yields general coping strategies in youth, the literature has only started explaining the ways in which Black youth apply *racial* socialization to their *racial* coping strategies (Anderson, Jones, Anyiwo, et al., 2019). RECAST argues that RS can serve as a means by which parents and children can practice behaviors, talk through questions, and develop varied coping plans for specific racial encounters. As parental RS skills and competencies develop, RECAST suggests that applying cognitive–behavioral approaches to the RS process can gradually build the confidence of parents and children to reappraise stressful racial interactions and resolve conflicts (i.e., a competency approach). Within a content-based RS frame, type or frequency of RS may not predict how confident and prepared parents are to racially socialize. Yet, confidence and preparedness may minimize the stress associated with future socialization tasks (see Berkel et al., 2009; Hughes et al., 2008; Stevenson & Arrington, 2009). Thus, it is important to contextualize the static or content-oriented notions and adopt a sense of RS as fluid, contextually based, and adaptive.

In developing mastery of parenting tasks, RECAST assumes that parents must not only become aware of their attitudes, knowledge, and behaviors during RS (Frydenberg, 2004), but also manage their emotions, thoughts, and body reactions during DREs (Stevenson, 2014). As such, corresponding assessments of parents' beliefs, preparation, and stress are proposed to be effective tools in evaluating parental competency (Anderson, Jones, & Stevenson, 2019). This competency approach is consistent with other research-based parenting programs designed to improve child behaviors (Kaminski et al., 2008). Shifting from content-focused legacy measurement to literacy skills-building measurement reframes the lay phrase, "The Talk" to "Walking of The Talk," as a better proxy for cataloguing how the process actually unfolds for caregivers. Additionally, RECAST's developmental approach acknowledges RS as flexible and malleable, particularly for parents who have had fewer opportunities to be socialized themselves. RECAST provides insight regarding those who may socialize frequently but remain feeling incompetent or stressed in the task. As such, the development of skills and confidence to reduce stress is conceptualized as the foundation of RS competency (Anderson, Jones, & Stevenson, 2019). Consequently, the RS field is challenged by the following question, "How skilled are parents during RS with their children?" Anderson and colleagues have proposed that parental confidence, stress, and skills are equally important to assess once it is considered that parents are concerned with the effectiveness of their socializing efforts. To address these gaps in knowledge, it is important to ask, "What factors undermine or enhance the competence of practicing the transmission and acquisition of RS between family members?"

Historical and contemporary associations with parental racial socialization

Scholars have identified a number of parent and child demographic factors that correlate to either RS content, RS quantity, or both (Hughes et al., 2006). In terms of parent gender, mothers provide more messages (Brown et al., 2010; Hughes & Chen, 1997) and different RS content in different modalities (Lesane-Brown, 2006; White-Johnson et al., 2010) than fathers. Child gender has also been found to impact both the content (McHale et al., 2006) and the frequency (Brown et al., 2010) of RS, often because parenting practices differ for children of varying gender expressions (Varner & Mandara, 2014) and because environmental factors (e.g., racial discrimination) differ in prevalence by gender (Lee et al., 2019). In addition, research indicates that RS approaches vary by age of the child (Doucet et al., 2018; Hughes et al., 2006) and parent (Thornton et al., 1990). From a developmental perspective, parents' RS content and competency may shift as youth's socioemotional and cognitive abilities, as well as experiences, change with age. Further, racial messaging and confidence, skills, and stress associated with the RS process may be based on the life experiences of older parents. Additionally, Black parents with higher socioeconomic standing (e.g., higher income, greater educational attainment) report transmitting more cultural socialization and preparation for bias messages than those with lower socioeconomic standing (Crouter et al., 2008; Hughes & Chen, 1997; McHale et al., 2006). Some studies have found that middle/moderate SES families report some RS messages (e.g., racial pride, preparation for bias) with the greatest frequency, suggesting a curvilinear association (Caughy et al., 2002; Thornton, 1997).

In addition to demographic characteristics, parents' race-related factors have been associated with RS content and quantity. One such factor is racial identity, or the significance and meaning of race to an individual (Sellers et al., 1998). Research by Thomas and Speight (1999) found that African American parents who felt more strongly connected to their race (i.e., race centrality) were more likely to see RS as essential than those for whom race was less central. Work using latent-class analysis (White-Johnson et al., 2010) found that mothers in a cluster characterized by the most frequent and most varied approach to RS had significantly higher levels of several racial identity dimensions (i.e., centrality, nationalist ideology, private regard; see Sellers et al., 1998 for more discussion on dimensions). In addition, experiences with racial discrimination have an influence on RS delivery, namely the provision of cultural socialization (McNeil Smith et al., 2016) and preparation for bias (Hughes & Chen, 1997) messages, as well as multidimensional patterns of messages (White-Johnson et al., 2010). Lastly, messages that parents received about race in their childhood have also been found to predict their RS practices (Hughes & Chen, 1997; White-Johnson et al., 2010).

Considering both racial socialization content and competency

Given that it would be maximally informative to understand how these various components of RS co-exist, person-centered analyses—which allows for grouping individuals into profiles based on similar characteristics that differ from those of individuals in different profiles—are best to capture this synergy (White-Johnson et al., 2010). White-Johnson and colleagues extended work by Neblett et al. (2008) and identified three profiles of Black mothers' RS across content areas: (1) Multifaceted (most RS messages and behaviors); (2) Low Race Salience (moderate messages and behaviors); and (3) Unengaged (fewest messages and behaviors). In addition, this investigation revealed both demographic (e.g., education level) and race-related (e.g., racial discrimination and racial identity) factors differentiated mothers in these profiles. Cooper, Smalls-Glover, Metzger and Griffin (2015a) similarly used latent profile analysis (LPA) to examine African American fathers' reports of their RS messages in which they

identified similar profiles (e.g., Low Race Salience) while also identifying profiles typified by different patterns of RS (e.g., Positive Socializers).

In the current study, we extend these person-centered analyses on RS, taking into account both RS content and competency. This investigation assesses responses to both a content-based measure and a novel competency-based measure. We expected to identify distinct profiles that would be a combination of RS practices, confidence, skills, and stress. That is, while we anticipated caregivers may provide similar messages (e.g., similar levels of racial pride) across profiles, they might differ in profile depending on how confident, skillful, or stressed they felt about delivering such messages. We also hypothesized that there would be similar associations for parent and child demographic variables, and for parent race-related experiences, as was observed in White-Johnson et al. (2010), Cooper, Smalls-Glover, Metzger and Griffin (2015), and Anderson et al. (2019).

METHOD

Participants

The current study analyzed a sample of 361 Black caregivers. Human subjects Internal Review Board (IRB) approval was completed prior to study recruitment. The protocol was determined exempt as authorized by 45 CFR 46.104, category #2. Caregivers were recruited using three methods: (1) Amazon's Mechanical Turk; (2) Qualtrics' Panel Management; and (3) listservs for organizations with a Black or parenting focus. Amazon's Mechanical Turk (MTurk) is an online platform that helps users recruit other people to complete various tasks, including research surveys (Buhrmester et al., 2011). Qualtrics Panel Management is a service offered by Qualtrics Inc. (2020) that uses existing panels to distribute surveys according to predetermined criteria. Both platforms were used as a means of efficiently recruiting and enrolling a specific sample of interest (i.e., Black or African American, caregiver to a youth age 18 or younger). Across all platforms, several questions were added to the screening methods of the platforms, including veracity checks, requests for best effort, and verification of racial identification before proceeding. Participants were asked to complete the online survey keeping their oldest child under the age of 18 in mind. The analytic sample was restricted to mothers and fathers given that the numbers of other caregivers did not allow for group comparison. This restricted sample ($n = 332$) was largely (72.6%) mothers. The mean age across caregivers was 37.2 years (SD = 9.44). Most caregivers (63.6%) were married or living with a partner, 27.1% were single, and 7.8% were divorced or separated. The median reported family income was between $50,000 and $74,999, with approximately 31% of caregivers reporting family incomes between $25,000 and $49,999. Approximately 30% of parents reported their highest educational level as high school, with a similar proportion (28.6%) reporting having a bachelor's degree. Of the remaining caretakers, 14.2% indicated having community college or an associate's degree, and about one fifth indicated either a masters (13.0%) or advanced professional degree (e.g., MD; 6.6%). Slightly more than half of the target children were male (52.4%), with an average age of 9.32 years (SD = 5.20).

Measures

Sociodemographic information

Caregivers were asked to complete several sociodemographic items including age; sex (male, female, and write in options); race/ethnicity (e.g., Black and White); caregiver status (e.g., mother and father); and several indicators of socioeconomic status, including level of educational attainment

(Middle School to Advanced Degree) and annual household income ($0–$24,999 to $200,000 and up). Lastly, parents were asked to provide the age and sex of their oldest child under age 18.

Racial socialization competency

The Racial Socialization Competency Scale (RaSCS) is a theoretically derived instrument based on the constructs within the RECAST. The original validation paper (Anderson, Jones, & Stevenson, 2019) conducted a factor analysis on 28 items (e.g., "teach my child to speak up if they are negatively mistreated by an authority figure of another race"). For each item, caregivers were given three prompts to endorse the following conceptual constructs: *confidence* ("I believe I can"), *skills* ("I am/would be prepared to"), and *stress* ("I am/would be stressed to"). Confirmatory Factor Analysis revealed a one-factor structure for confidence (27 items, $\alpha = 0.96$) and skills (27 items, $\alpha = 0.96$) and a two-factor structure for stress. Nineteen items constituted a *General RS Stress* subscale (e.g., "Teach my child to listen to a peer or partner who has been racially mistreated"; $\alpha = 0.94$) and seven items made up a *Call to Action RS Stress* subscale (e.g., "Teach my child to speak up if they witness peers being racially mistreated; $\alpha = 0.87$). All items were measured on a 5-point scale, with lower scores indicating less endorsement.

Racial socialization frequency of content

The Racial Socialization Questionnaire-Parent Version (RSQ-P; Lesane-Brown et al., 2009) is a 26-item, parental self-report measure that assesses how often parents communicate race-related messages to the target child. The 26 items of the RSQ-P comprise six subscales that measure the extent to which a primary caregiver has engaged in RS activities within the past year. The 4-item *Racial Pride* subscale measured the extent to which primary caregivers emphasize Black unity, heritage teachings, and positive feelings toward Black people (e.g., "Told the target child that s/he should be proud to be Black"). The 4-item *Racial Barriers* subscale measured the extent to which parents emphasize an awareness of racial inequities and coping strategies (e.g., "Told the target child that some people try to keep Black people from being successful"). The 4-item *Egalitarian* subscale measures the extent to which messages regarding interracial equality and coexistence are emphasized (e.g., "Told the target child that Blacks and Whites should try to understand each other so they can get along"). The 4-item *Self-Worth* subscale measured the extent to which positive messages about the self are conveyed (e.g., "Told the target child that s/he is somebody special, no matter what anyone says"). The five-item *Negative* subscale measures the extent to which messages that disparage Black people are conveyed (e.g., "Told the target child that learning about Black history is not that important"). The 5-item *Socialization Behaviors* subscale measures the frequency of various socialization activities related to Black culture (e.g., "Bought the target child books about Black people"). Parents were asked to respond to each item using a 3-point rating scale (0 = "never" to 2 = "more than twice") to indicate how often they have communicated each message or behavior to the target child in the past year. Subscales were calculated by averaging across each of the items such that higher scores indicated a greater frequency of the particular message or behavior. Reliabilities ranged from $\alpha = 0.80$ (*Egalitarian*) to $\alpha = 0.86$ (*Negative*).

Parents' childhood racial socialization experiences

Prior RS messages were assessed using the Childhood History Racial Socialization Scale (CHRS; Coleman & Stevenson, 2013), a 9-item scale that measures the frequency caregivers'

families of origin discussed positive and negative views about coping with racial conflicts with same-race and cross-race others (e.g., "Growing up my family talked to me about racial discrimination"). Participants responded on a 5-point scale ranging from "Never" to "Very Often." The initial development of this measure suggested a one-factor model, with summed frequency as the target construct (Coleman & Stevenson, 2013). Higher scores indicate receiving more frequent RS, regardless of the type of RS. In the current analysis, items of the CHRS were averaged and demonstrated good internal consistency (α = 0.79).

Racial identity

The Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity-Short (MIBI-S: Martin et al., 2010) was used to assess caregivers' racial identity. The 27-item MIBI-S is a shortened form of the Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity (MIBI) consisting of its highest loading items. The MIBI-S uses a 7-point Likert-type scale (1 = "Disagree Strongly" to 7 = "Agree Strongly"). *Racial Centrality* assesses the degree to which race is a central aspect of the individual's identity (e.g., "Being Black is an important reflection of who I am"; 4 items; α = 0.76). *Racial regard* assesses the degree of positive feelings toward one's racial group (e.g., "I'm happy that I am Black"; *Private regard*; 3 items; α = 0.81) and how individuals feel others view Blacks (e.g., "Overall, Blacks are considered good by others"; *Public regard*; 4 items; α = 0.84). *Assimilationist ideology* assesses the view that Blacks should become more like Whites and emphasize mainstream American identity over a Black identity (e.g., "Blacks should strive to be full members of the American political system"; 4 items; α = 0.76). *Humanist ideology* assesses the belief that people should be viewed in light of their similarities with all human beings instead of social identities such as race (e.g., "Blacks should judge Whites as individuals and not as members of the White race"; 3 items; α = 0.68). *Minority ideology* assesses the extent to which individuals view the similarities between oppressed minority groups (e.g., "The racism Blacks have experienced is similar to that of other minority groups"; 4 items; α = 0.76). *Nationalist ideology* highlights the uniqueness of Blacks' experiences as an oppressed group (e.g., "Whenever possible, Blacks should buy from other Black businesses"; 4 items; α = 0.72).

Parents' racial discrimination

Experiences with discrimination were assessed using the brief version of the Racism and Life Experiences Scales (RaLES-B; Harrell et al., 1997). For the RaLES-B, a 9-item average was computed. All items were measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale, oriented such that higher scores indicated higher experience of race-related stress. Sample items include "In general, how much stress has racism caused you during your lifetime?"; "Overall, how much do you think racism affects the lives of people of your same racial/ethnic group?" Various iterations of the RaLES-B have been shown to be a reliable and valid measure of perceived discrimination in previous studies (Caughy et al., 2003; Utsey, 1998). Reliability for the current sample was also good (α = 0.81).

Data analytic plan

To establish profiles of parents' reports of content and competency approaches to RS, three-step LPA (Asparouhov & Muthén, 2014) was conducted using MPlus version 8 (Muthén & Muthén, 2017). LPA is a model-based analytic approach that provides statistical criteria for selecting a plausible solution among alternatives (Magidson & Vermunt, 2004). In the 3-step

LPA approach, individuals are first grouped into profiles based on the pattern of their various responses to RS messages across the sample (see Neblett et al., 2008). We ran a series of models (using an observed covariance matrix and maximum likelihood estimation with robust standard error) starting with a one-profile model and iteratively adding profiles until the addition of subsequent profiles no longer improved model fit. We considered a number of fit indices to compare these models, including the Akaike information criterion (AIC), the Bayesian information criterion (BIC), and the sample-size-adjusted BIC. For each of these, lower scores represented better fitting models. We also considered the Lo-Mendell-Rubin (LMR) likelihood ratio test, which provides a test as to whether the estimated model provides a significant improvement ($p < 0.05$) over the model with one fewer profile, and Entropy, or the average accuracy in assigning individuals to profiles (0–1), with higher scores reflecting greater accuracy.

In the second step, individuals were assigned to the profiles based on posterior probabilities. In the third step, and similar to work by White-Johnson et al. (2010), we explored a number of covariates. Specifically, multinomial logistic regression was utilized to examine profile differences in sociodemographic variables as well as racially relevant associative variables (i.e., childhood RS experiences, racial identity, and experiences with racial discrimination). Additionally, given our previous findings on the relationship between RS competency and general stress (Anderson, Jones, & Stevenson, 2019), we explored this relationship among our profiles. These analyses were conducted using the AUXILIARY command R3STEP in the Variable statement (Asparauhov & Muthén, 2014).

RESULTS

Content and competency racial socialization profiles

Of the estimated models, the authors decided that the three-profile solution was the most parsimonious. Although the AIC and BIC decreased with increasing profiles (e.g., 4- and 5-profiles), the LMR test statistic indicated that the three-profile solution showed an improvement compared with the two-profile solution, while the four-profile solution did not show significant improvement from the three-profile solution. In addition, the Entropy for the three-profile solution was higher than that of the four-profile solution. All fit statistics are provided in Table 1.

The raw and standardized means of each RS variable were used to describe and label the profiles. The largest profile, *Multifaceted & More Competent* (*MMC*; $n = 211$, 63.6%), was characterized by scores above the sample mean on all content socialization messages assessed by the RSQ-P except Negative messages. In addition, individuals in the *MMC* profile also had

TABLE 1 Summary of information criterion statistics for latent profile analyses of legacy and literacy racial socialization

Latent profile(s)	AIC	BIC	Adjusted-BIC	Entropy	LMR adjusted LRT
1	7137.483	7215.15	7151.7		
2	6376.396	6496.779	6398.431	0.90	$p = 0.15$
3	5901.749	6064.849	5931.604	0.96	$p < 0.001$
4	5699.822	5905.638	5737.495	0.93	$p = 0.12$
5	5507.322	5755.854	5552.814	0.94	$p = 0.28$
6	5356.245	5647.494	5409.557	0.90	$p = 0.25$

Abbreviations: AIC, Akaike information criteria; BIC, Bayesian information criteria; LMR, Lo-Mendell-Rubin.

relatively higher self-report of RS Confidence and Skills and lower General RS Stress. The second largest profile (*n* = 61, 18.4%), *Unengaged & Moderately Competent (UModC)*, scored below the sample mean on nearly all RS content and competency variables, with the exception of Call to Action and General RS Stress, which was reported around the sample mean. The third profile (*n* = 60, 18.1%), *Negative*, *Stressed*, *& Less Competent (NSLC)*, was characterized by very high relative Negative messages (nearly 2SD above the mean), low Self-Worth messages (more than 0.5 SD below the mean), and RaSCS scores indicative of low RS competence, including Confidence and Skills nearly 1SD below the mean, and General RS Stress nearly 0.5 SD above the mean (see Figure 1).

Profile differences among key study variables

Sociodemographic variables

We examined parent and child age, parent and child gender, caregiver educational status, and family income by profile for all possible comparisons (see Table 2). Regarding parent age, caregivers in the *NSLC* profile were younger than those in the other two profiles. Relative to the *NSLC* profile, for every one year increase in parent age, caregivers were 1.15 times more likely to be in the *MMC* profile and also 1.15 times more likely to be in the *UModC* profile. Relative to those in the *MMC* profile and those in the *NSLC* profile, children of those in the *UModC* profile were likely to be younger. With regard to parent gender, fathers were significantly less likely to be in the *UModC* profile relative to the *NSLC* profile. Notably, child gender, parents' education, nor family income varied significantly by profile.
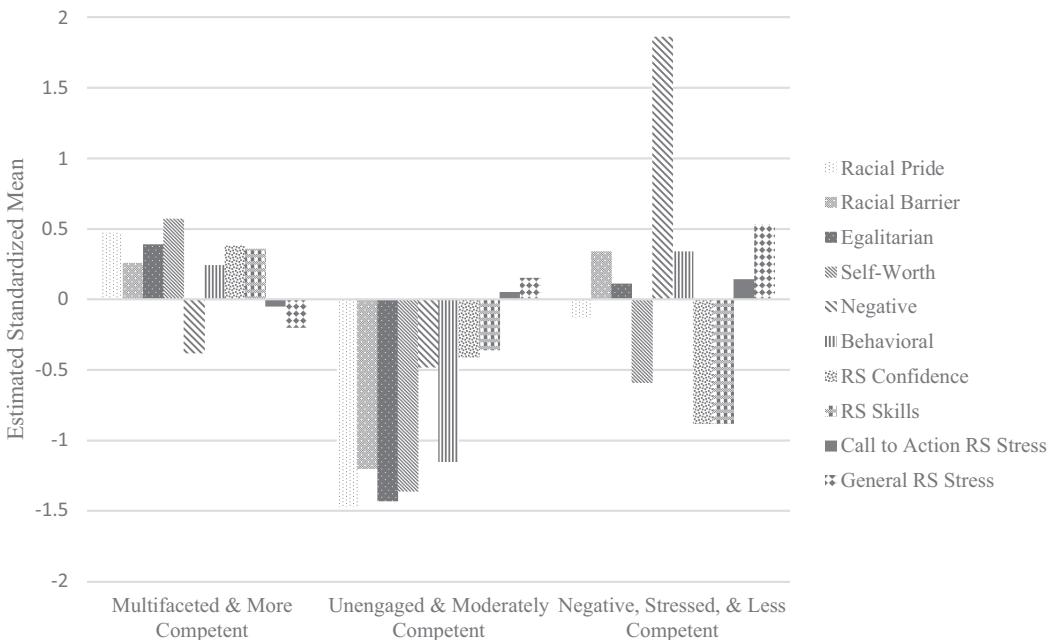

FIGURE 1 Standardized means of latent racial socialization profiles

TABLE 2 Multinomial logistic regression parameter estimates for sociodemographic and race-related covariates

Variable	Unengaged & moderately competent			Negative, stressed, & less competent		
	b	SE	OR [95% CI]	*b*	SE	OR [95% CI]
Multifaceted & more competent profile as reference group						
Parent gender	−0.30	1.01	0.74 [0.10, 5.36]	2.01	1.16	7.46 [0.77, 72.50]†
Child gender	0.16	0.40	1.17 [0.54, 2.57]	0.86	0.47	2.36 [0.94, 5.94]†
Parent age	−0.01	0.03	0.99 [0.93, 1.05]	−0.14	0.05	0.87 [0.79, 0.96]**
Child age	−0.17	0.06	0.84 [0.75, 0.95]**	0.04	0.07	1.04 [0.91, 1.19]
Parent education	−0.13	0.14	0.88 [0.67, 1.16]	0.15	0.18	1.16 [0.82, 1.65]
Family income	0.03	0.14	1.03 [0.78, 1.36]	−0.08	0.12	0.92 [0.73, 1.17]
Parent RS	−1.02	0.32	0.36 [0.19, 0.68]**	0.60	0.48	1.82 [0.71, 4.67]
Centrality	−0.33	0.21	0.72 [0.48, 1.09]	−0.83	0.33	0.44 [0.23, 0.83]**
Public regard	−0.32	0.18	0.73 [0.51, 1.03]†	1.63	0.30	5.10 [2.83, 9.19]***
Private regard	−0.43	0.24	0.65 [0.41, 1.04]†	−1.58	0.39	0.21 [0.10, 0.44]***
Assimilationist	−0.45	0.21	0.64 [0.42, 0.96]*	−0.69	0.29	0.50 [0.28, 0.89]*
Humanist	0.23	0.22	1.26 [0.82, 1.94]	−0.79	0.36	0.45 [0.22, 0.92]*
Oppressed minority	−0.31	0.19	0.73 [0.51, 1.06]	0.42	0.29	1.52 [0.86, 2.69]
Nationalist	0.33	0.21	1.39 [0.92, 2.10]	0.51	0.25	1.67 [1.02, 2.72]*
Racial discrimination	−0.63	0.33	0.53 [0.28, 1.02]†	0.59	0.37	1.80 [0.87,3.73]
Unengaged & moderately competent profile as reference group						
Parent gender				2.31	1.12	10.07 [1.12, 90.49]*
Child gender				0.71	0.58	2.03 [0.65, 6.34]
Parent age				−0.14	0.05	0.87 [0.79, 0.96]**
Child age				0.20	0.08	1.22 [1.04, 1.43]*
Parent education				0.28	0.21	1.32 [0.88, 2.00]
Family income				−0.11	0.17	0.90 [0.64, 1.25]
Parent RS				1.61	0.45	5.00 [2.07,12.09]***
Centrality				−0.49	0.34	0.61 [0.31, 1.19]
Public regard				1.95	0.33	7.03 [3.68,13.42]***
Private regard				−1.15	0.30	0.32 [0.18, 0.57]***
Assimilationist				−0.23	0.34	0.79 [0.41, 1.55]
Humanist				−1.02	0.38	0.36 [0.17, 0.76]**
Oppressed minority				0.72	0.32	2.05 [1.10, 3.85]*
Nationalist				0.18	0.30	1.20 [0.66, 2.16]
Racial discrimination				1.22	0.40	3.39 [1.55, 7.42]**

Note: Parent and Child Gender (0 = Female, 1 = Male).

Abbreviation: OR, odds ratio.

†$p < 0.10$, *$p < 0.05$, **$p < 0.01$, ***$p < 0.001$.

Childhood racial socialization experiences and current racial identity

Parents' report of RS during childhood and their current racial identity were next explored. Relative to the *UModC* profile, a one-unit increase in childhood RS was associated with a 2.77 times greater likelihood of being in the *MMC* profile and 5.02 times greater likelihood of being

in the *NSLC* profile. With regard to racial identity, relative to the *MMC* profile, a one-unit increase in racial centrality was associated with a 56% decreased likelihood of being in the *NSLC* profile. Similarly, increases in private regard were associated with decreased odds of being in the *NSLC* profile (relative to the *MMC* profile. Relative to *MMC* (OR = 5.11) and the *UModC* (OR = 7.02) profiles, and higher public regard was associated with a greater likelihood of being in the *NSLC* profile. With regard to racial ideology, increases in the endorsement of assimilationist ideology were associated with decreased odds of being in the other two profiles (relative to the *MMC* profile). Those endorsing greater nationalist ideology were more likely to be in the *NSLC* profile (relative to *MMC*), while those endorsing greater oppressed minority ideology were more likely to be in the *NSLC* profile (relative to *UModC*). Lastly, greater endorsement of humanist ideology was associated with a relatively decreased likelihood of being in the *NSLC* profile compared with the other two profiles. See Table 2 for racial identity comparisons.

Racial discrimination

Finally, relative to those in the *UModC* profile, a one-unit increase in racial discrimination was associated with a 3.22 times greater likelihood of being in the *NSLC* profile.

DISCUSSION

The primary goal of this study was to assess the interplay of Black caregivers' RS content and competence, and to determine whether these patterns were associated with demographic, discrimination, and racial identity factors. Using LPA, we found that there were three profiles among our sample of Black caregivers, including *Multifaceted & More Competent*, *Unengaged & Moderately Competent*, and *Negative*, *Stressed*, *& Less Competent*. RS frequency of content and competence differed among the profiles. The largest profile, *MMC*, described endorsing not only the most content-related RS messages (e.g., racial pride, racial barrier, and egalitarian), but also reported the most competence (e.g., more skills, more confidence, and less RS stress). Caregivers in this profile were found to have a higher than average and a consistent approach to addressing race with children, particularly as it pertains to racial pride, self-worth, and barriers. This finding, especially supported by the higher-than-average sense of competence in this transmission, indicates that caregivers feel they have a plethora of RS tools at their disposal to address both racially positive and challenging events in children's lives. The great proportion of the sample and the varied nature of the *MMC* profile's distribution are similar to the *Multifaceted* profile found in White-Johnson and colleagues' research (2010), with the exception of self-worth messages, which were higher within this group for the current study. This higher endorsement of self-worth messages could be reflective of parents' desire to endorse these messages with more regularity in light of the nation's current racial climate.

Key features of the *UModC* profile were very low frequencies of RS competency messages in addition to below the mean reports of RS skills and confidence and above the mean scores of RS stress. While caregivers within the *UModC* profile were less likely than other parents to utilize any of the content-oriented RS strategies, they were relatively more likely to use negative messages compared with any other strategy. This group was consistent with White-Johnson et al.'s (2010) unengaged group, with one important distinction. High negative scores, which were only found among the *NSLC* profile, were not a central feature of the *UModC*. In this way, the *UModC* profile was more similar to the unengaged group found in Varner et al. (2018) recent investigation, albeit that analysis was from the youths' report. *NSLC* was a rather unique profile relative to other studies that have investigated distinctive properties between

RS practices (Dunbar et al., 2015; White-Johnson et al., 2010). In addition to the high negative scores—a pattern seen in only two other investigations (Cooper, Smalls-Glover, Neblett, & Banks, 2015; Varner et al., 2018)—caregivers reported very low RS competency and relatively high RS stress. As such, caregivers in *UModC and NSLC* may be disengaged and negative for a host of reasons, but chief among them may be their lack of skills and confidence and increased stress as it pertains to RS transmission (Anderson & Stevenson, 2019). Findings regarding increased skill and competence and reduced stress are replete in other parenting literatures (Colalillo & Johnston, 2016), but have yet to be extended to our understanding of RS practices. These distinctive and more comprehensive profiles can contribute to a burgeoning RS literature by identifying applied practices for the improvement of behaviors and personal efficacy associated with the types of racial messages parents may be using with children.

While a profile approach to RS content and frequency has increased (Caughy et al., 2011; Cooper, Smalls-Glover, Metzger, & Griffin, 2015; Neblett et al., 2008; Varner et al., 2018), this study is among the first demonstrating how components of parental skill, confidence, and stress correspond to RS content practices. This shift to competency is an important component of assessing in what ways improvements can be made to the RS process (e.g., caregivers' behaviors) to subsequently improve the outcomes for children engaging in this RS transmission. From a health behaviors perspective, promoting increased competency for parents may influence both the esteem and behaviors of their children when engaging in this dyadic process (Colalillo & Johnston, 2016). This investigation of caregivers' processes produces important findings that underscore how parents *themselves* may be differentially unprepared and equipped to engage in RS processes.

Profile differences: parent and child demographic factors

With regard to parental demographics, increased parental age was associated with a decreased likelihood of being in the *NSLC* profile relative to the other two profiles. For the *MMC* profile, similar findings by Hughes et al. (2006) suggest that older parents provide more messages than their younger counterparts (Hughes et al., 2006). However, to our knowledge, this is the first caregiver-centered study to demonstrate age effects. Moreover, the implications of older age being associated with perceptions of relatively greater competency may necessarily highlight the temporal importance of RS skill building (i.e., improving younger parents' competency may be most beneficial).

Perhaps not surprising given the differences in parent age, children in the *NSLC* profile were likely to be younger than those in the *MMC* profile. In addition to replicating previous content-based socialization findings on the impact of child age, it may also be the case that parents of older children may endorse a greater variety of messages and may grow to feel better prepared to navigate these conversations, presumably gaining confidence and skill over time. More work is needed to confirm or challenge these presumptions. Lastly, the finding that fathers were more likely to be in the *NSLC* profile (relative to the *Unengaged)* was intriguing. Indeed, Cooper, Smalls-Glover, Neblett and Banks (2015) work identified both "Infrequent" and "Negative" RS profiles. Furthermore, these two profiles differed in size by only one participant. As such, it is interesting to see the relevance of parental gender in a sample including both mothers and fathers.

Profile differences: race-related experiences

Beyond the findings for demographic variables, we found profile differences in race-related variables (i.e., received childhood messages, racial identity, and experiences with racial discrimination). Unfortunately, there is a dearth of research that explores the impact of parents'

childhood RS messages (Hughes & Chen, 1997; Jones & Neblett, 2019; White-Johnson et al., 2010). Nevertheless, this study adds to the growing literature assessing the impact of intergenerational effects on this process. That caregivers in the *UModC* profile reported significantly fewer messages on the significance, and meaning of race is consistent with previous investigations (see White-Johnson et al.). However, considering not only content and competency sheds additional light into the significance of this finding. Specifically, given that there was no significant difference between the *MMC* and *NSLC* profiles may suggest that the primary impact of receiving messages about race in childhood is that it equips parents with beliefs, messages, and behaviors to model to their own children (i.e., that childhood RS is most impactful for content rather than competency). Further research is needed to ascertain whether simply receiving RS in childhood differentially impacts how confident and competent parents feel in delivering RS messages to their own children.

Racial identity emerged as a relevant factor in distinguishing the profiles we extracted in ways that generally support the theoretical underpinnings of the construct. Parents in the *MMC* profile felt that race was more central to who they were and felt more positively about being Black. The implications for understanding RS competency again loom large: it may be that the high significance and positive associations of Blackness leave parents feeling more confident and skillful and less stressed in teaching their children about these topics. This is somewhat consistent with previous findings that have indicated that those with high racial centrality see RS as essential (Thomas & Speight, 1999). Interestingly, the belief that Black people should integrate themselves with mainstream America, that is, assimilationist ideology, was also higher for those in the *MMC* group. Given that the only other study assessing the role of racial ideology found *nationalist* ideology to be higher among caregivers labeled Multifaceted, we are left with a possibility that endorsement of assimilationist ideology may portend higher perceptions of confidence and skills. Parents who adopt an assimilationist perspective may feel that the RS process will be more manageable with this framing in mind.

Another intriguing finding was the higher endorsement of public regard found among those in the *NSLC* profile. This finding is counter to a previous study of Black fathers who endorsed high negative messages: fathers in that study indicated less public regard (Cooper, Smalls-Glover, Neblett, & Banks, 2015). Black parents who perceive that others view their race favorably (high public regard), may experience less stress around teaching their own child about race. At the same time, it could be that parents who hold a higher public regard may find themselves unprepared to navigate teaching their children about a racialized world that is less receptive of their Blackness in reality. A similar naiveté may result in these parents being more likely to endorse negative messages, ostensibly operating from a mindset that if outgroups view Black people favorably, then any racial conflicts must be due to deficits within the Black community. That said, the interesting ideology findings of higher nationalist and oppressed minority ideology and lower humanist ideology suggest that these relationships may be even more complicated.

Lastly, the finding that those in the *UModC* profile reported significantly less racial discrimination than the *NSLC* profile has been previously seen in similar investigations (Cooper, Smalls-Glover, Neblett, & Banks, 2015; White-Johnson et al., 2010). This finding is consistent with other research in which racial discrimination predicted parents' RS delivery (Hughes & Chen, 1997). Taken together, these robust findings both connect to seminal research on RS content and support the continued worth of exploring RS competency.

Implications

Given that none of these parenting constructs exists in a vacuum, a profiled approach helps us to understand which groups may be more easily targeted in interventions aiming to change

some constructs of interest. In particular, if a parent is highly confident and skilled but also highly stressed, we can utilize health behavior approaches which targets stress rather than an approach which improves skill. If profiles prove useful within interventions, the implications for how they can improve triage decision-making and whether individual-, group-, or family therapies might be best. In light of the dual pandemics facing America—health and racial violence concerns— practitioners must take up the charge to become more racially competent in their relationship-building, discourse, and ethical practice with their clients. Given that RS competency is a lens by which parents can be viewed, it will be critical for clinicians to understand their own competency and gain more experience with racial literacy practices mentioned within this paper (e.g., racial skills, confidence, etc.) to better facilitate parent and child growth and healing through these challenging times.

Limitations and future directions

Although this study advances our understanding of processes and correlates of RS, there are shortcomings. Of greatest importance, controlling for the constructs of general stress and competence would have strengthened the findings of the current investigation. Additionally, while the sample represented Black families from across the United States, they were not nationally representative. As such, there may have been a significant difference that we could not assess because of the tendency of the whole sample to represent such a phenomenon. Relatedly, given that our sample was predominately mothers and fathers, we did not have the statistical power to explore the role that caregiver's relationship to the child may have had on our findings. Finally, perceiving oneself to be competent and demonstrating competence, stress management, and skills during the RS conversation with children are different. The current findings did not investigate how profiles or correlates are related to and impact observable parent and youth delivery practices and outcomes.

Future investigations, therefore, should consider a number of methodological and clinical steps. First, it is critical to assess parental and child outcomes that correspond to these profiles to determine whether there are parenting strategies which are more beneficial to health and wellness outcomes. In addition, we advocate for the continued recruitment of extended kinship caregivers to better understand how these dynamics impact the RS process. Second, we strongly encourage RS scholars to expand to mixed methods approaches, particularly with regard to investigations that center on RS competency. Such approaches capture parents' ability to skillfully communicate RS strategies in richer, more nuanced ways. Self-report using numerical (e.g., Likert) responses of notions of confidence or skill can be supplemented by caregivers' verbalized experiences (e.g., during interviews) and by observation during family-level RS conversations. Third, interventions which focus on Black family functioning and socialization in particular may benefit from understanding how RS content and competence are related. In particular, the Engaging, Managing, and Bonding through Race (EMBRace; Anderson et al., 2018) intervention aims to improve parental RS competency, and, as such, may help to unearth whether behavioral interventions can change initial and responsive competence throughout the intervention. It would also behoove family dynamics researchers to assess co-parenting styles dyadically to gauge whether parental consistency of competence impacts children's reception of the messages (Jones & Neblett, 2019). Finally, the reduction of parental (and subsequently, youth) stress is a relatively novel approach within the RS literature but is crucial to understand with regard to behavioral and psychological improvement for parents within RS practices. The literature is often hyper-focused on child behaviors and outcomes, but an equal focus should be on parents, particularly in stress reduction, to deliver more competent communication to their children.

CONCLUSION

In summary, this study underscores the value of considering not only the racial content of what parents say ("The Talk) to their children, but also how confident, skilled, or stressed they feel as they deliver the messages in real time ("Walk the Talk"). If we indeed are to protect the wellbeing of Black youth, we must begin to have a concentrated stake in the factors that help or hinder Black caregivers as they develop and refine their RS skills. Such attention paid will only yield dividends as the field continues to support culturally responsive family processes.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST
The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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