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Contextual Emotion Expression: Profiles of African American Report in the Family and on Campus



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Introduction

- Open emotion expression within African American culture (i.e., affect; Boykin, 1986)
- Restrictive expression of negative emotion by African American mothers (Hill & Tyson, 2008; Nelson et al., 2012)
- Adaptive racial/ethnic and emotion socialization-differential expression with regard to public and private contexts (Dunbar et al., 2017)
- Unique patterns of emotion expression among AA

Research Questions/Hypotheses

1. Do African American young adults express their emotion similar to African American parents (i.e., greater positive expression than negative)? Yes
2. Do African American young adults express their emotion differently in different/private and public contexts (i.e., family and public)? Yes, greater family expression than public expression
3. How do African American young adults express their emotion in public?

Methods

- 169 African American/Black college students aged 18-54
- 62.7% female, 1.8% genderqueer/gender non-conforming
- 24.3% at a PWI, 53.8% at a racially diverse university, and 21.9% at a HBCU
- 33.7% freshman, 24.3% sophomore, 22.5% junior, 18.9% senior, and 0.6% other
- Qualtrics survey data collection : Self-Expressiveness in the Family and on Campus (SEFQ; Halberstadt et al., 1995), Racial Discrimination on Campus ((BMEM; Cunningham & Spencer, 1996), Racial Composition of Friend Group

Data Analysis

- Latent Profile Analysis via Latent Gold 5.1 (Vermunt, 2010; Vermunt & Magidson, 2013)-3-step approach
 1. Estimation of profiles using indicators (i.e., emotion expression)
 2. Model selection based upon fit indices (i.e., log-likelihood, BIC)
 3. Prediction of profile membership based on racial discrimination

Results

- Five profiles emerged: *More Positive Expression* (n = 55; 32.5%), *More Negative Submissive Expression* (n = 43; 25.4%), *More Campus Positive and Negative Dominant Expression* (n = 38; 22.5%), *Less Expression* (n = 24; 14.2%), and *More Family Expression* (n = 9; 5.3%)

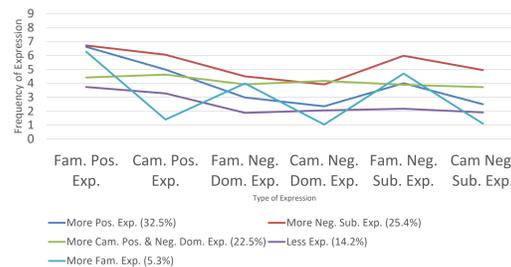


Figure 1. Profiles of Emotion Expression in the Home and on Campus (unstandardized means). Error bars represent standard errors. pos = positive; emo = emotion; exp = expression; neg = negative; dom = dominant; sub = submissive

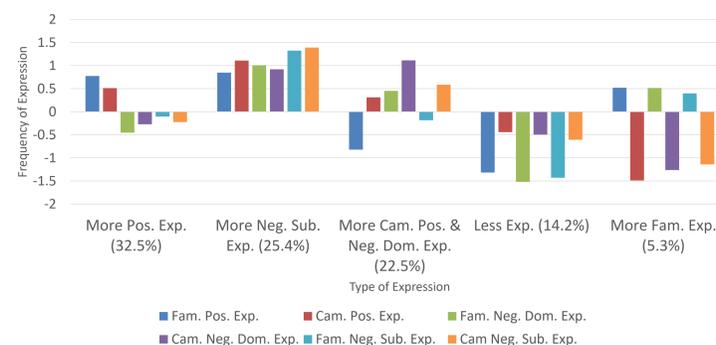


Figure 2. Profiles of Emotion Expression in the Home and on Campus (standardized means). Error bars represent standard errors. pos = positive; emo = emotion; exp = expression; neg = negative; dom = dominant; sub = submissive

Discussion

- Preference for positive emotion in African American culture (Boykin, 1983; Halberstadt & Lozada, 2011; Labella, 2018)
- Restriction of negative emotion and flexibility of expression with regard to context
- Students in the *More Negative Submissive Expression* profile likely have a supportive family emotional climate generally (Nelson, Leerkes, O'Brien, Calkins, & Marcovitch, 2012)
- The family emotional climate of students in the *More Campus Positive and Negative Dominant Expression* appears to be less supportive of positive emotion

Conclusion

- African American young adults express emotion differently according to context
- Emotional messages in the family are pivotal to contextual emotion expression

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