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## Bullying, depression, and parental acceptance in a sample of Latinx sexual and gender minority youth

Roberto L. Abreu<sup>a</sup> , G. Tyler Lefevor<sup>b</sup> , Kirsten A. Gonzalez<sup>c</sup>,  
Aldo M. Barrita<sup>d</sup>  and Ryan J. Watson<sup>e</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Department of Psychology, University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida, USA; <sup>b</sup>Department of Psychology, Utah State University, Logan, Utah, USA; <sup>c</sup>Department of Psychology, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Tennessee, USA; <sup>d</sup>Department of Psychology, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, Las Vegas, Nevada, USA; <sup>e</sup>Department of Human Development and Family Sciences, University of Connecticut, Storrs, Connecticut, USA

### ABSTRACT

Sexual and gender minority (SGM) youth of color—in particular Latinx SGM youth—experience higher incidents of bullying compared to heterosexual and cisgender White youth. These disparities oftentimes explain increased negative mental health outcomes, such as depression. Parental acceptance may be a particularly important buffer to the effects of bullying on negative mental health outcomes among Latinx SGM youth. In a sample of 1,005 Latinx SGM youth (ages 13-17), we assessed: (a) the prevalence of parental acceptance and bullying, (b) the influence of bullying on depression, and (c) whether the relationship between bullying and depression was moderated by parental acceptance. Results showed that, on average, Latinx SGM youth reported rarely experiencing parental acceptance, frequently experiencing symptoms of depression, and frequently being bullied. Findings revealed that parental acceptance and bullying were significantly related to depression. Furthermore, there was no interaction between parental acceptance and bullying on depression. Findings have implications for how different Latinx cultural values may be further considered to better understand Latinx SGM youth's perception of their parental figure's acceptance of their sexual and gender identity and its role on bullying and depression.

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Most members of minoritized groups report experiencing bullying at least once in their lifetime. Bullying is defined as unsolicited and undesired aggressive or intimidating treatment by others often from dominant groups (e.g., cisgender, heterosexual, White peers), which is often reinforced by power structures (Gladden et al., 2014). Bullying may include verbal, physical, or relational harassment (Moran et al., 2018), and can occur in different forms such as in-person and online (cyberbullying; Hinduja & Patchin, 2012; Moran et al., 2018). Experiences of bullying have been

**CONTACT** Roberto L. Abreu  [rabreu26@ufl.edu](mailto:rabreu26@ufl.edu)  Department of Psychology, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32611-7011, USA

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associated with negative mental health outcomes, such as depression and suicidality (e.g., Brunstein Klomek et al., 2007; Cardoso et al., 2018; Zych et al., 2015). Research shows that support from parental figures is one of the most important protective factors against depression among sexual and gender minority (SGM) youth (e.g., Abreu et al., 2019; Hall, 2018). However, there is paucity of research regarding experiences with bullying among groups with multiple marginalized identities, such as Latinx SGM youth, and the role of parental figures on the well-being of these youth. This study aimed to explore the effects of bullying and depression and the role of parental acceptance on bullying in a sample of Latinx SGM youth.

### **Latinx youth's experiences of bullying and depression**

Research indicates that experiences of bullying is linked to high rates of suicidality, depression, risky behaviors (e.g., using drugs), and negative coping strategies (e.g., self-harm) among Latinx youth (see Lorenzo-Blanco et al., 2016; Lutrick et al., 2020 for a review). Additionally, Latinx girls report being bullied primarily by their boy-identified peers while Latinx boys experience bullying from other boy-identified peers (Cardoso et al., 2018). Furthermore, ethnically-based verbal and relational bullying among Latinx youth have been found to be direct predictors of depressive symptoms (Cardoso et al., 2018; Romero et al., 2018). Overall, this body of research clearly suggests that bullying leads to negative outcomes for Latinx youth (e.g., Cardoso et al., 2018; Romero et al., 2018), including SGM youth (e.g., Shramko et al., 2018; Zongrone et al., 2020a).

According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2021), it is unclear how often are racial and ethnic minority youth being bullied because of their racial and/or ethnic identity. Less is known about the prevalence of different forms bullying (e.g., in-person, online) among racial and ethnic minority youth. While a recent longitudinal study with African American and Latinx adolescents found that participants experienced high levels of cyberbullying (Tynes et al., 2020), more research is needed to understand the nuances about different forms of bullying among racial and ethnic minority youth.

### **Bullying of sexual and gender minority youth and depression**

SGM youth report experiencing bullying, both in-person and virtually, at higher rates than their cisgender and heterosexual counterparts (e.g., Abreu & Kenny, 2018; Crothers et al., 2017; Fish & Pasley, 2015; Garaigordobil et al., 2020; Kosciw et al., 2020; Mustanski & Liu, 2013). Exposure to bullying has been associated with poor mental health outcomes, including

depression, suicidal ideation, and lower self-esteem (Abreu & Kenny, 2018; Kosciw et al., 2020). In addition, while research has highlighted experiences of bullying in school among SGM youth, oftentimes school professionals fail to intervene and protect SGM students (Abreu et al., 2016; Abreu et al., 2017; Earnshaw et al., 2020).

Some research indicates that SGM youth who also identify as racial and/or ethnic minority are more vulnerable to increased levels of depression as a result of bullying compared to their White SGM counterparts (e.g., Boyas et al., 2019; Shramko et al., 2018; Truong et al., 2020a, 2020b; Walls et al., 2019; Zongrone et al., 2020a, 2020b). Specific to Latinx SGM youth, in a recent study of 3,352 Latinx SGM students, Zongrone and colleagues (2020a) found that approximately 42% of participants experienced harassment or assault based on the intersection of their sexual orientation, and/or gender identity, and race and/or ethnicity. They also found that participants experienced greatest levels of depression compared to those who experienced victimization for only one of these identities. In addition, gender diverse youth report higher incidents of bullying (Abreu & Kenny, 2018; Kosciw et al., 2020) compared to their cisgender counterparts, resulting in increased depression (e.g., Butler et al., 2019; Eisenberg et al., 2019; Kosciw et al., 2020). For example, in a study of 8,440 youth (13-17 years old), researchers found that gender diverse participants reported higher incidents of bullying and depression compared to their cisgender counterparts. Furthermore, these incidents are specifically higher for gender diverse people who also identify as racial and/or ethnic minorities (e.g., Kosciw et al., 2020). While some studies have called for an intersectional approach when exploring bullying among SGM youth (e.g., Dominski, 2016; Earnshaw et al., 2017; 2020), there has been paucity of research on this area. Specific to Latinx SGM youth, more research is needed in order to explore the effects of bullying on depression.

### **Parental involvement, bullying, depression, and Latinx sexual and gender minority youth**

Although there is dearth of research about the relation between parental involvement and Latinx youth's understanding and experiences with bullying, some studies indicate that Latinx parental figures are engaging in conversations with their children about the dangers of bullying (e.g., Edwards et al., 2022; Smith & Norris, 2020). For example, in a study with 164 Latinx girls (ages 11-14), Smith and Norris (2020) found that participants shared that most of their parental figures had spoken with them about the dangers of bullying perpetration and provided them information about victimization. In addition, although not specific to bullying, research indicates that cultural factors such as generational differences, levels of

acculturation, regional differences, and language barriers play a crucial role in the relation between Latinx youth and their parental figures (e.g., Gonzalez & Méndez-Pounds, 2018; Suizzo et al., 2019; Tilghman-Osborne et al., 2016). To illustrate, in a study with 16 Latinx parental figures, Gonzalez and Méndez-Pounds (2018) found that the Latinx cultural values, beliefs, and traditions of respect, speaking Spanish in the household, and family cohesion were identified as crucial to the parent-child relationship. This research, however, has yet to explore the role of these cultural values, beliefs, and traditions in bullying and depression among Latinx youth. Furthermore, this research has only been conducted with heterosexual and cisgender participants, or researchers have not assessed for sexual orientation and gender diversity among participants. Therefore, it is plausible to believe that Latinx cultural factors will play a role in parental involvement and Latinx SGM youth's experiences with bullying and depression.

### **Parental acceptance, bullying, depression, and Latinx sexual and gender minority youth**

Research does not provide a concrete definition for parental acceptance of one's SGM child. Overall, the available literature provides guidance on behaviors parental figures engage toward their child after learning or suspecting the child's SGM identity (e.g., abuse, support), as well as the SGM child's reactions as a result of these behaviors (e.g., psychological distress, positive emotional connections with others). For this study, we operationalize parental acceptance as behaviors of love, affection, care, and support toward one's SGM child. On the other hand, we operationalize parental rejection as behaviors that are opposite to love, affection, care, and support (e.g., neglect, abuse).

Research shows that parental acceptance serves as a buffer against depressive symptoms among SGM youth (e.g., Dickenson & Huebner, 2016; Hall, 2018; Katz-Wise et al., 2016). For example, in a systematic review of 35 studies, Hall and colleagues (2018) found that decreased levels of parental acceptance was related to increased levels of depression among SGM youth. In another study with 245 SGM youth, researchers found that participants who were enrolled in conversation therapy by their parental figures reported greater levels of depression, suicidal ideation, and suicide attempts (Ryan et al., 2020). Although research has established the relationship between bullying and depression in Latinx and SGM youth and the importance of parental acceptance in depression among SGM youth, there is a dearth of research about the role of parental acceptance on bullying among Latinx SGM youth. In addition, to our knowledge, no study has explored the association between parental acceptance and depression among Latinx SGM youth and the role of parental acceptance on bullying among Latinx SGM youth.

Different Latinx cultural values, beliefs, and traditions are likely impact the way Latinx parental figures interact with SGM youth and how Latinx SGM youth perceive acceptance by their parental figures. Latinx SGM youth often grow up in environments where the cultural values of *familismo*, strong connection to religion and spirituality, and different gender norms such as *machismo*, *cabellerismo*, and *marianismo* are endorsed (Adames & Chavez-Duenas, 2017; Arredondo et al., 2014). These values socialize Latinx SGM youth to be family oriented and reinforce norms that are both affirming and stigmatizing of their sexual and gender identity (Abreu, Riggle et al., 2020; Gattamorta et al., 2019, Lozano et al., 2021). While research shows that *familismo*, religion and spirituality, and gender norms could serve as a protective factor for depression for Latinx people, including youth (e.g., Ayón et al., 2010; Chavez-Korell et al., 2014), these studies have mostly been conducted with heterosexual and cisgender participants. Therefore, it is unclear if these cultural factors are also protective for Latinx SGM youth (Abreu & Gonzalez, 2020; Abreu, Gonzalez et al., 2020). The current bullying and parental acceptance literature have been slow to examine the role of parental acceptance on bullying among Latinx SGM youth.

### Current study

Research indicates that Latinx and SGM youth report experiences of bullying at higher rates than their White, cisgender, and heterosexual counterparts, leading to higher incidents of depression. In addition, research indicates that Latinx parental figures are engaging in conversations with their children about the effects of bullying, and that parental acceptance serves as a protective factor against depression for SGM youth. However, research with Latinx SGM youth has yet to provide a clear understanding about the prevalence and impact of bullying, the effects of bullying on depression, and the role of parental acceptance on bullying on this group. To begin to address these research gaps, we used subset of data from a large national survey of SGM youth in the United States. Our research questions are divided into four broad areas of inquiry:

- R1: How often do Latinx SGM youth report bullying?
- R2: To what degree do Latinx SGM youth report parental acceptance?
- R3: How does bullying influence depression among Latinx SGM youth?
- R4: Does parental acceptance buffer the influence of bullying on depression among Latinx SGM youth?

## Method

### *Study design and participant recruitment*

Participants were part of the *LGBTQ National Teen Survey*, an online, anonymous survey of LGBTQ+ adolescents collected between April and December, 2017. To be included, participants must have lived in the United States, identified as LGBTQ+, and been between 13 and 17 years old at the time of survey. Participants were recruited from a variety of sources primarily through social media such as Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook. Researchers partnered with the Human Rights Campaign (HRC), who leveraged their large network of community providers (e.g., the Trevor Project), to advertise the study to their constituents via advertisements from social media influencers. Participants were compensated with HRC wristbands and entered a drawing to receive one of 10, \$50 gift cards.

The study was approved by the University of Connecticut Review Board. The Review Board granted a parental waiver of consent and all participants provided assent to participate prior to proceeding given the negative risk of unintended disclosure by youth participants. Survey completion took approximately 43 minutes. Participants first provided demographic information, and then subsequent blocks with topically grouped questions. Questions were randomized to reduce problematic patterns of missingness. See Watson et al. (2020) for additional information about survey recruitment, data cleaning, and respondent analysis.

### *Participants*

To be included in the present study, participants must have: a) identified as Latinx, b) been out to at least one parent (because it would be unclear about the meaning of parental acceptance if youth were not out), and c) completed measures of focal variables. Although 17,112 people started the survey, 9,460 completed the entire survey. Of those who completed the survey, 2,915 were Latinx. Of these, 1,292 reported being out to their parental figures (1,077 had missing data on this item, 546 reported not being out). Of the Latinx SGMs who were out to their parental figures, 1,005 responded to questions about family acceptance, bullying, and depression. These individuals comprise our primary analytic sample.

### *Measures*

#### *Demographic information*

Participants reported their gender, race/ethnicity, sexual identity, and age. Both gender and race/ethnicity were measured using a checkbox approach,



meaning that participants could select all options that applied to them. For gender, participants were given the following options: transgender boy, transgender girl, cisgender boy, cisgender girl, genderqueer, or other (participants were provided a text-box). Visual inspection of the responses of participants who marked *something else* indicated these participants largely identified as genderqueer, reporting identities such as agender, androgynous, and genderfluid. Consequently, these participants were recoded as nonbinary/genderqueer. To facilitate the analyses, we created separate variables: cisgender boy, cisgender girl, transgender boy, transgender girl, nonbinary/genderqueer.

We used one multiple-choice question to measure racial/ethnic identity: “How would you describe yourself?” Response options included, “White, non- Hispanic,” “Non-Latino Black or African American,” “Native American or Alaska Native,” “Asian or Pacific Islander,” “Latino, Hispanic, or Mexican-American,” and “Other.” Participants could select as many response options as applied to them. Everyone who selected “Latino, Hispanic, or Mexican-American” was included in the current study.

### **Parental acceptance**

Parental acceptance was assessed using 8-items that measured sexuality- and gender-specific parental acceptance (Miller et al., 2020). Participants used a five-point Likert scale to respond to items such as, “How often do your parents say that they like you as you are in regards to being an LGBTQ person?,” “How often do your parents say they were proud of you for being an LGBTQ person?,” and “How often do your parents taunt or mock you because you are an LGBTQ person” (reverse coded). This scale has been used in multiple studies with large samples of Latinx LGBTQ youth and has shown to have a high reliability (e.g., Gamarel et al., 2020). For this study, internal consistency was excellent ( $\alpha = .90$ ).

### **Depressive symptoms**

Depression was assessed using the Kutcher Adolescent Depression Scale (LeBlanc et al., 2002), an 11-items scale. The suicidal ideation question of this scale was not administered to participants because a parental waiver of consent was obtained. Participants responded to each of the remaining 10 items by indicating how often they had experienced several depressive symptoms in the last week on a 4-point scale. Symptoms included: “low mood,” “sadness,” “feeling blah or down,” “depressed,” and “just can’t be bothered.” Response options included: “hardly ever,” “much of the time,” “most of the time,” “and all of the time.” This scale has been used in multiple studies with large samples of Latinx youth (e.g., Quiroga et al.,



2017) and LGBTQ youth (e.g., Eisenberg et al., 2020) and has shown to have a high reliability. For this study, the scale demonstrated excellent internal consistency ( $\alpha = .90$ ).

### ***Bullying experiences***

Experiences of bullying were assessed through three questions. Participants reported if they had ever been bullied: a) on school property, b) outside of school property, or c) electronically, including through email, chat rooms, instant messaging, websites, or texting. Dichotomous variables (i.e., Yes [1], No [0]) were created for each of these three forms of bullying. To facilitate analyses, we also created a composite “bullying” variable that combined our three indicators of bullying into a single variable, with the summed score indicating whether participants reported 0, 1, 2, or 3 different forms of bullying.

### ***Analysis plan***

Analyses comprised three steps. First, we examined how often youth reported experiences of bullying and parental acceptance in our sample. Next, we examined how well parental acceptance and bullying predicted depression. Finally, we examined whether parental acceptance moderated the relationships between bullying and depression. We conducted all analyses in SPSS version 25, centering continuous terms before doing interaction analyses. All variables evidenced good skewness and kurtosis (between  $-1$  and  $1$ ), and no outliers were detected.

## **Results**

### ***The prevalence of bullying and parental acceptance***

Our sample was primarily young ( $M_{\text{Age}} = 15.66$ ,  $SD = 1.24$ ), cisgender boys (32.4%), and girls (45.2%). Additionally, 27.9% of the sample identified as transgender or gender non-binary, with 14.1% identifying as transgender boys, 1.2% identifying as transgender girls, and 14.9% identifying as gender nonconforming or genderqueer. Most of the sample reported always living in the United States (90.4%). Many participants reported that both parents were born in the United States (47.9%), with a minority reporting that neither parent was born in the United States (26.3%). On average, participants reported that they were “rarely” or “sometimes” ( $M_{\text{Parental Acceptance}} = 2.39$ ,  $SD = 0.76$ ) supported by their parental figures. Also, participants experienced symptoms of depression between “much of the time” and “most of the time” ( $M_{\text{Depression}} = 1.42$ ,  $SD = 0.77$ ). About a third of

participants reported being bullied, with bullying at school being the most common form (41.0%), followed by cyberbullying (37.5%) and being bullied off school property (33.0%). Most participants reported at least one type of bullying (58.7%). Altogether, these demographics suggest that our sample experienced significant degrees of all three focal variables: parental acceptance, depression, and bullying.

### ***Bullying and depression***

We conducted a regression to understand the influence of bullying on depression and to examine whether the relationship between bullying and depression was moderated by parental acceptance. We included age, gender (expressed as four dichotomous variables: cisgender boy, cisgender girl, transgender boy/girl [combined due to the small number of transgender girls in the sample], nonbinary/genderqueer), length of time living in the United States, and the number of parents born in the United States (with a max of 2) as covariates in the first step (Model 1). In the second step, we included parental acceptance and the composite variable of the three different forms of bullying (Model 2). In the final step, we included interaction terms between parental acceptance with bullying (Model 3). See Table 1.

Results of Model 1 indicated that individuals who identified as a cisgender girl ( $b=0.21$ ,  $SE=0.08$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and those who identified as a transgender boy or girl ( $b=0.66$ ,  $SE=0.07$ ,  $p < .01$ ) reported more depression,  $F(7,996) = 20.46$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $R^2 = .13$ . Results of Model 2 indicated that parental acceptance and bullying were both related to depression,  $F(9,994) = 16.37$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $R^2 = .24$ . Both parental acceptance ( $\beta = .17$ ) and bullying ( $\beta = .20$ ) were significantly and substantially related to depression.

Model 3 did not evidence improved fit above Model 2,  $F_{\text{change}}(1,993) = 1.24$ ,  $p = .27$ , and the interaction term did not emerge as significant. As such, Model 2 was retained as the final model and there was deemed to be insufficient evidence to demonstrate interactions between parental acceptance and bullying on depression. This finding suggests that parental acceptance operates in a similar way regardless of whether someone is bullied. For example, although high degrees of parental acceptance are related to reduced depression, the relationship between bullying and depression was not changed based on the degree of parental acceptance that youth experience.

We also tested two sets of models examining the relationship between parental acceptance, bullying, and depression among cisgender and among transgender and nonbinary youth separately. These models did not differ

**Table 1** Regression examining if parental acceptance moderates the effects of bullying on depressive symptoms (n = 1005).

	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3		
	b	SE	$\beta$	b	SE	$\beta$	b	SE	$\beta$
Age	−0.01	0.02		−0.01	0.02		−0.01	0.02	
Length of time in US	0.08	0.06		0.08	0.06		0.08	0.06	
Parents born in US	< 0.01	< 0.01		< 0.01	< 0.01		< 0.01	< 0.01	
Cisgender Boy	−0.01	0.08		−0.02	0.08		−0.02	0.08	
Cisgender Girl	0.29*	0.09	.19	0.25*	0.08	.16	0.25*	0.08	.16
Transgender Boy/Girl	0.66*	0.07	.40	0.58*	0.07	.35	0.58*	0.07	.35
Nonbinary/Genderqueer	−0.05	0.09		−0.07	0.08		−0.08	0.08	
Parental Acceptance				−0.17*	0.03	−.17	−0.20*	0.04	−.20
Bullying				0.20*	0.02	.29	0.20*	0.02	.29
Bullying x Acceptance							0.03	0.03	
Model Fit Statistics									
F	20.46**			35.78*			32.34*		
R <sup>2</sup>	.13			.24			.24		
F <sub>change</sub>				78.30*			1.24		
R <sup>2</sup> <sub>change</sub>				.12			< .01		

Note. Transgender boys and girls were combined into one category because so few participants identified as transgender girls (n = 12);

\*p < .05;

\*\*p < .01.

substantially from those presented above and are displayed in Tables S1 and S2 of the [online supplemental material](#).

## Discussion

We sought to further the scholarship on bullying and parental acceptance by understanding the prevalence of bullying and parental acceptance, the role of bullying and depression, and the role of parental acceptance on bullying in a sample of Latinx SGM youth. Our findings indicated that Latinx SGM youth are reporting: a) low levels of parental acceptance, b) depressive symptoms, and c) experiences of bullying (with school bullying being more prevalent). While some research shows that Latinx SGM youth are disproportionately bullied, harassed, and discriminated because of the intersection of their race and/or ethnicity and minoritized sexual and gender identity compared to their White SGM counterparts (e.g., Kosciw et al., 2020; Zongrone et al., 2020a), our findings provide more specific evidence about where bullying and harassment is happening for Latinx SGM students. Specifically, our findings show that bullying is happening more frequently for Latinx SGM youth in person at school and online. To our knowledge, no other study has examined the prevalence of different forms of bullying in a Latinx-exclusive sample of SGM youth. Several scholars have called for SGM-specific bullying and harassment interventions

(e.g., Abreu et al., 2016). Our findings take this recommendation a step further and highlights the need to target specific forms of bullying not only based on SGM identity but also based on other identities that intersect with SGM such as race and ethnicity.

Our findings also show that parental acceptance was a strong predictor for depression, even when controlling for the effects of bullying. While previous studies with Latinx SGM youth and their parental figures show that parental acceptance manifests differently for this community given the role of Latinx cultural values, beliefs, and traditions (e.g., *familismo*, religion and spirituality, and different gender norms; Abreu, Riggle et al., 2020; Gattamorta et al., 2018; Lozano et al., 2021), this is among one the first studies to establish the importance of parental acceptance in levels of depression for Latinx SGM youth. Our findings highlight the importance of parental acceptance among parental figures of Latinx SGM youth, and the need to communicate to Latinx parental figures in a culturally appropriate manner the importance of accepting and affirming their SGM child.

Our results show that bullying was significantly related to depression for Latinx SGM youth. This finding highlights the insidious nature of bullying and suggests that reducing bullying may be important to improving the mental health of Latinx SGM youth. In addition, while the study at hand explored the experiences of only one racial and ethnic minority group (Latinx), our findings shed light about the importance of not lumping together all SGM youth of color and, instead, critically exploring how bullying affects differently SGM youth of color from different ethnic and ethnic minority group. For example, while our results show that in-person bullying is a stronger predictor of depression for Latinx SGM youth, this might not be the same case for other racial and ethnic minority SGM youth.

Our findings also show that experiencing parental acceptance did not lessen the impact of bullying for our participants. This finding is also unique because it suggests that increasing parental acceptance and decreasing bullying of Latinx SGM youth may be distinct processes. Indeed, while some scholars have recommended that anti-bullying efforts should include the involvement of parental figures (see review in Abreu & Kenny, 2018), our findings show that both parental acceptance and anti-bullying are important but that they may be two distinct interventions. In fact, given research that supports that the relationship between parental figures and their SGM family members is unique for different racial and ethnic groups (e.g., Abreu, Riggle et al., 2020; Abreu et al., 2019; Gattamorta et al. 2018; LaSala, 2010), we suggest that clinicians, school staff and personnel, and others who come into contact with SGM youth inform themselves about different family dynamics before assuming that getting parental figures and family members involved will be beneficial for SGM youth.

### ***Strengths, limitations, and future research direction***

This study has many strengths that are that are important to acknowledge. First, regarding the parental acceptance literature, this study is one of the first ones to establish the importance of parental acceptance in depression among Latinx SGM youth. While some studies have established that Latinx SGM youth experience higher levels of negative experiences in school (e.g., Kosciw et al., 2020; Zongrone et al., 2020a) and the role of peers and school personnel in the well-being of Latinx SGM youth (e.g., Zhao et al., 2021), our study adds to this literature by showing the important role of parental acceptance in depression among Latinx SGM youth. Second, our study used a large sample of Latinx youth. This large sample made it possible to examine various forms of bullying and the role of parental acceptance on bullying. In fact, a review of the literature revealed that in studies that have explored cyberbullying among SGM youth, Latinx participants are simply absent or represent a small percentage (e.g., Priebe & Svedin, 2012; Schneider et al., 2012). Third, our study utilized a multi-faceted parental acceptance scale, moving beyond the typical single-item measurement commonly used in the parental acceptance literature.

There are several limitations that are worth noting. First, although we found that parental acceptance is a significant indicator of depression for SGM youth, we are unable to examine the reasons for this. Future research should specifically inquire about different Latinx cultural values, beliefs, and traditions that Latinx SGM youth believe facilitate and/or prevent their parental figures from accepting them. For example, some research has established that there are specific cultural values, such as gender norms (e.g., *machismo*, *marianismo*, *caballerismo*), family cohesion, and religion and spirituality, that play a crucial role in the acceptance journey of Latinx parental figures (e.g., Abreu, Gonzalez et al., 2020; Abreu, Riggie et al., 2020; Gattamorta et al., 2019). Similarly, future research should use acculturation and ethnic identity scales (e.g., Marin & Gamba, 1996) or gender norms scales (e.g., Piña-Watson et al., 2014), among others, to better understand how cultural values, beliefs, and traditions might influence the impact of parental acceptance on Latinx SGM youth. Second, although we did not find an interaction between parental acceptance and bullying on depression, we are unable to comment on the reasons for this. While there is some research to suggest that compared to their White SGM counterparts, SGM youth of color (including Latinx) are less likely to be out to their family (see review in Moradi et al., 2010), we do not know if coming out and/or any other variables are the reason for this finding. Future research should consider using qualitative research approaches such as in-depth interviews with Latinx SGM youth in order to inquire about what family aspects might help them cope and be protective against bullying. Third, our data were

collected through an online survey. While research has documented the advantages of collecting data online with LGBTQ participants (e.g., accessing hard-to-reach populations such as trans and youth of color; Riggle et al., 2005), we might not have reached all possible Latinx SGM youth online. Future research should supplement internet data collection with recruitment efforts from community organizations where you would find marginalized Latinx SGM youth such as those in rural communities. Fourth, this study represents only the perspective of SGM youth, and not that of their parental figures. Future research should focus on further exploring the perspective of SGM youth and their parental figures such as using dyadic in-depth interviews in order to inquire about ways in which parental figures might be able to buffer the effects of bullying on their child's symptoms of depression. Finally, while the multi-faceted parental acceptance scale used in this study has been used in other studies with large samples of Latinx SGM youth, this scale might not accurately account for Latinx-specific cultural differences such as generational status. Future research should develop and validate parental acceptance scales that best captures Latinx specific cultural values, beliefs, and traditions.

Despite these limitations, the present study represents one of the largest examinations of the role of bullying and parental acceptance among Latinx SGM youth. Our findings highlight the insidious nature of bullying in the lives of Latinx SGM youth. Even though parental acceptance was not shown to buffer experiences of bullying per se, we found that parental acceptance was an important factor in reducing depression among SGM youth. We encourage parental figures, educators, and allies to focus both on intervening in the bullying of SGM youth and encouraging parental acceptance.

## Notes on contributors

**Roberto L. Abreu**, PhD, is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Psychology at the University of Florida and the director of the *Collective Healing and Empowering VoicEs through Research and Engagement* (¡Chévere!) Lab. His research focuses on the well-being of LGBTQ individuals, Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color (BIPOC), and those who self-identify at the intersection of LGBTQ and BIPOC identities. Specifically, Dr. Abreu's research explores ways in which families and community members navigate relationships with their LGBTQ members.

**G. Tyler Lefevor**, PhD, I am an Assistant Professor in the combined Clinical/Counseling program at Utah State University. His research examines how and when religiousness is related to health among sexual and gender minorities to better inform psychotherapy and public policy.

**Kirsten A. Gonzalez**, PhD, is an Assistant Professor of Counseling Psychology at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville (UTK) and the director of the Research on Social

Intersections at Tennessee (ReSIsT) Lab. Her research interests include the psychological well-being of LGBTQ+ People of Color, the intersection of Latinx and LGBTQ+ identities, belonging and community connection for LGBTQ people broadly and bisexual and transgender folks specifically, ally development, social justice advocacy and interventions, biracial/multiracial experience, intersectionality, minority, race-related, and acculturative stress, and sociopolitical experiences of marginalization across race/ethnicity, gender identity, and sexual orientation.

**Aldo M. Barrita**, MA, is a doctoral student affiliate in the Psychological and Brain Sciences Ph.D. program at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. His research explores the psychological impact of racial, ethnic and sexual minority microaggression on marginalized individuals.

**Ryan J. Watson**, PhD, is an Associate Professor in the Department of Human Development and Family Sciences, University of Connecticut. His program of research is focused on reducing health disparities among sexual and gender minority (SGM) youth and young adults, including their relationships within family and school contexts and their health experiences.

## ORCID

Roberto L. Abreu  <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-1305-2152>

G. Tyler Lefevor  <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-4510-7306>

Aldo M. Barrita  <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-6596-1078>

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