

Cultural Diversity & Ethnic Minority Psychology

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Online First Publication, August 5, 2024. <https://dx.doi.org/10.1037/cdp0000695>

CITATION

Simon, K. A., Sumontha, J., Blankenau, A., Domyancich-Lee, S., Farr, R. H., Kim, A. Y., & Lee, R. M. (2024). Adoptive parents' racial colorblindness and adopted Korean adolescents' experiences of discrimination.. *Cultural Diversity & Ethnic Minority Psychology*. Advance online publication. <https://dx.doi.org/10.1037/cdp0000695>

Adoptive Parents' Racial Colorblindness and Adopted Korean Adolescents' Experiences of Discrimination

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Objectives: Using longitudinal data, this study investigated the association between parent racial colorblindness and discrimination toward children (reported by both parents and adolescents) in transracial, transnational adoptive families. **Method:** Eighty White adoptive parents with adopted Korean children (ages 5–12 years old) were surveyed in 2007 (Time 1 [T1]), and both parents and adolescents (ages 13–19 years old) were surveyed in 2014 (Time 2 [T2]). Parents completed a self-report measure of parent racial colorblindness toward their child at T1 and T2, and parents and adolescents completed a measure of discrimination experienced by adoptees at T2. **Results:** Parent reports of racial colorblindness toward their child were not significantly different between T1 and T2. However, parent reports of discrimination increased between time points. Further, parent and adolescent reports of discrimination were not significantly different from one another. Using hierarchical regression models, racial colorblindness among parents at T1 (when children were in middle childhood) was significantly associated with parent reports of discrimination experienced by adolescent children at T2, even when controlling for T2 racial colorblindness. This association did not hold for adolescent reports of discrimination. **Conclusion:** Adoptive parents' acknowledgment of their children's race and ethnicity appears relatively stable from childhood into adolescence, and parent racial colorblindness toward their own child can affect their ability to recognize discrimination during adolescent development, a vital period when discrimination becomes more common and salient.


Public Significance Statement


Transracial, transnational adopted Korean Americans face distinct discrimination experiences compared to other racial-ethnic minority groups and Asian Americans who are not adopted. Parent racial colorblindness toward their children among White adoptive parents, who formed their families through transracial, transnational adoptions, was stable over a 7-year period. Further, racial colorblindness was associated with the degree to which parents perceived their children to experience discrimination during adolescence. Understanding the complex racial dynamics in transracial, transnational adoptive families provides a broader understanding of how racial colorblindness functions in the context of discrimination.


Keywords: racial colorblindness, transracial adopted youth, transnational adopted youth, Korean Americans, discrimination

Supplemental materials: <https://doi.org/10.1037/cdp0000695.supp>

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The research was supported in part by an National Institute of Mental Health K-01 award (Grant MH070740) to Richard M. Lee, University of Minnesota. The content is solely the responsibility of the authors and does not necessarily represent the official views of the National Institutes of Health.

Kay A. Simon played a lead role in conceptualization and writing—original draft. Jason Sumontha played a lead role in data curation and formal analysis.

Amelia Blankenau played a supporting role in conceptualization and an equal role in writing—review and editing. Shawyn Domyancich-Lee played a supporting role in writing—review and editing. Rachel H. Farr played a supporting role in supervision and writing—review and editing. Adam Y. Kim played a supporting role in writing—review and editing. Richard M. Lee played a lead role in funding acquisition, investigation, project administration, resources, and supervision and a supporting role in data curation and writing—review and editing.

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The experiences of transracially, transnationally adopted youth and how to support them and their adoptive families is an ongoing area of interest among scholars, especially as it pertains to race. Transracial adoption is a form of adoption in which the race of the parent(s) is different from the child (R. M. Lee, 2003), and transnational adoption is a type of adoption in which a child is adopted from another country (Selman, 2015). Race-related experiences among adopted children of color in transracially adoptive families are heavily impacted by the attitudes of adoptive parents—who may or may not view race or racial experiences as salient points of discussion (R. M. Lee, 2003; McRoy & Zurcher, 1983). White adoptive parents who are unprepared to discuss racism and discrimination could exacerbate stress associated with racial trauma (R. M. Lee & the Minnesota International Adoption Project, 2010). This can be problematic as adopted children of color enter adolescence, a developmental period during which they may experience higher levels of discrimination from others (D. L. Hughes et al., 2016). As more than 150,000 children from South Korea have been adopted transracially and transnationally by White parents in the United States (Raleigh, 2016), there is a need for additional research. Thus, the present study aimed to investigate racial colorblindness among White adoptive parents and its impact on transracially, transnationally adopted Korean American youth. Specifically, we were interested in the stability of parents' racial colorblindness toward their adopted children across time and whether these attitudes were associated with experiences of discrimination that adopted Korean American youth face, as reported by parents and adolescents.

Racial Colorblindness and Discrimination

Racial colorblindness¹ can be understood as beliefs that discussions of race should be downplayed, de-emphasized, or ignored (Neville et al., 2000). Adoptive parents may endorse racial colorblindness within the household for several different reasons (Lee et al., 2006). White adoptive parents may simply not believe race is an issue in society that is worthy of discussion (Docan-Morgan, 2011). Others may be invested in de-emphasizing race or ignoring racial issues with the intent of assimilating a transracially, transnationally adopted youth into White culture (Lo et al., 2021). White adoptive parents may also believe that adopted children are not old enough to discuss or understand race-related concepts (Goldberg et al., 2016).

Even if a White adoptive parent believes that there is racial inequality in society broadly, they may not believe that race plays a role in the life of their adopted child (Goar et al., 2017). This may also be more common among adopted families with Asian American adopted youth, as Asian Americans are frequently perceived as being adjacent to Whiteness and, in turn, are also perceived to not experience racial marginalization (Chang et al., 2017). Therefore, race is not consistently salient to adoptive parents, leading parents to downplay or minimize their child's background and experiences (Goar et al., 2017). Some adoptive parents may treat Korean American adopted children in their family as if they are White (Zhou et al., 2021). This racial colorblindness, then, can affect the dynamics between White adoptive parents and their children (Chang et al., 2017). For example, as an Asian American, an adopted Korean individual may be asked, "Where are you *really* from?" This is a common discriminatory comment (i.e., foreigner objectification; Docan-Morgan, 2010; Wu et al., 2020) that Asian

Americans receive, regardless of adoption status (Baden, 2016). A White adoptive parent may perceive this comment as a question of curiosity with no malintent or negative impact on a transnationally or transracially adopted person (Bergquist et al., 2003). An adoptive parent may also downplay racial differences to "protect" their adopted child from racial discrimination (Killian & Khanna, 2019), which can lead to adopted children being unprepared to cope with experiences of discrimination. However, the research conducted by Killian and Khanna (2019) utilized a sample of transracially adopted youth from multiple racial-ethnic backgrounds, with only a subsample of adopted Asian American youth.

Retrospective parent interviews with adopted Asian American youth have found that parent racial colorblindness may decrease over time, often after parents witness their child experience discrimination (Crolley-Simic & Vonk, 2011). However, other research has found the opposite wherein parent racial colorblindness increased over time. Specifically, racial colorblindness toward one's own child increases because of parents minimizing racial and ethnic differences within the family (Kim et al., 2013). As Asian Americans are perceived as the "model minority" (i.e., a stereotype that suggests a minority group has achieved greater status and does not experience discrimination relative to other minority groups; Chang et al., 2017), parents who show racial colorblindness toward their own children may be motivated to reduce differences in race and ethnicity. The reduction of one's racial-ethnic identity may, however, counterintuitively promote anti-Asian prejudice and encourage the dismissal of discrimination (Chang et al., 2017). The investigation of racial colorblindness and discrimination, then, is relevant given the increase in anti-Asian violence (Tessler et al., 2020). Taken together, adopted Korean Americans exist at a unique intersection of identities relative to other adopted persons and other racial-ethnic minority groups in the United States.

The literature on racial colorblindness (Goar et al., 2017) and discrimination (Chang et al., 2017) among adopted Korean Americans remains limited. This research has generally used qualitative methodology (Goar et al., 2017), relied on studies with one informant (i.e., adopted person or adoptive parent; Morgan & Langrehr, 2019), or was cross-sectional. This research, however, indicates that racial colorblindness is deeply embedded within White culture and in the ways that White adoptive parents interact with their transracially adopted Korean American children. For example, Goar et al. (2017) found that colorblindness was pervasive among White adoptive parents' conversations with their children (approximately half of whom were Asian American) at culture camps. Further, Chang et al. (2017) found that transracially adopted Korean American youth categorized parent socialization practices as generally avoidant (i.e., colorblind) or ambivalent, with fewer youth reporting that their parents engaged in racial socialization. With research showcasing persistent colorblind attitudes, additional work is needed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the experiences of adopted youth and parents in the context of racial colorblindness and discrimination.

¹ Colorblind(ness) as a term is inappropriate and unduly associates a disability (i.e., visual impairment) with racial bias. However, growing terms such as "color-evasive" attitudes may represent a subset of attitudes or behaviors (or are entirely distinct) from what may traditionally be considered as a colorblind attitude in that it may imply intentionality (Annamma et al., 2017). Thus, we chose to use the term colorblind as it reflects the measures used in our study. Future research should develop inclusive terminology to best distinguish between what are considered colorblind or color-evasive attitudes.

Inconsistencies in Communication

Racial colorblindness often involves downplaying discussions of race, leading to inconsistencies in race-related parent–child communication. In turn, reports of racial colorblindness may differ between adopted children of color and White adoptive parents. This becomes especially important in the context of transracial adoptions since many of these families are comprised of White adoptive parents and adopted youth of color (Crolley-Simic & Vonk, 2011). If White adoptive parents perceive their child in a racially colorblind manner, then the child may feel distant from their parents or that the adoptive parent does not understand their experiences as a racial minority. Indeed, several studies have found that transracially adopted adolescents report difficulty in developing a relationship with parents about their race-related experiences (Docan-Morgan, 2011; Goar et al., 2017). Thus, it is of interest to investigate the consistency of reports in studies of racialized family dynamics when multiple reporters are available.

Shared Fate Theory and Adopted Korean Americans

Shared fate theory (Kirk, 1964) provides a conceptual framework to understand the distinct ways parents recognize racial–ethnic differences in the family. Kirk (1964) posited that adoptive parents and adopted children have a shared fate, which is understood as the ways in which adoptive families have unique experiences and model relationships differently from families related through biological kinship. Acknowledging the shared fate within an adoptive family emphasizes the ways in which differences between the adopted child and adoptive parents can be a promotive factor for the entire family, particularly for the adopted child (Lo et al., 2021). In the context of transracial adoption, a shared fate may include the acknowledgment of adoption and the racial differences between adopted children and adoptive parents (Anderson et al., 2015; R. M. Lee, 2003). However, for adoptive parents who do not endorse a shared fate, family relationships likely invalidate racial differences in favor of emphasizing narratives of biological kinship. Thus, families formed through transracial adoption whose members endorse a shared fate may engage in promotive aspects of racial–cultural socialization (Lee et al., 2006) and avoid racial colorblindness. In turn, families who do not endorse a shared fate may emphasize egalitarian, racial colorblindness toward racial differences within their family.

Endorsement of a shared fate for adopted Korean American youth may be particularly complex. As Asian American and adopted individuals face unique forms of prejudice, the inclusion of one's transnational adoption status further complicates an understanding of a shared fate. Indeed, research finds that adopted Korean American youth undergo racial and adoptive identity development that involves a reclamation of one's culture (Baden et al., 2012), with sometimes little guidance from one's parents due to a lack of knowledge (Goar et al., 2017). The investigation of racial colorblindness that is informed by shared fate theory can help provide a greater understanding of the experiences of adopted Korean American youth.

A racial colorblindness approach among adoptive parents, involving a rejection of difference within the family, may reduce parent–child communication and familial bonds (Chang et al., 2017; Docan-Morgan, 2011). For example, White adoptive parents may downplay an adopted child's racial and ethnic background under the pretense of treating the child as “one of the family” (R. M. Lee, 2003). However, the rejection of racial differences within the family

can lead to children feeling invalidated, especially as it relates to their unique experiences (Hu et al., 2015; Kim et al., 2013). This invalidation may exacerbate stress that adopted children may experience related to race, which likely reduces parent–child communication (Anderson et al., 2015). These differential racial attitudes and experiences between adoptive parents and adopted individuals may also lead to inconsistencies in reporting, as documented research on cultural socialization in nonadoptive families has also found (D. L. Hughes et al., 2016). If adopted youth do not feel supported in their identity, then they may be less likely to report experiences of discrimination (Chang et al., 2017). This lack of reporting may also lead to greater vulnerability to future negative outcomes among adopted youth and adults, especially as it relates to experiences of racism and/or discrimination. In turn, how racial colorblindness impacts perceptions of discrimination among parents, and adopted adolescents' experiences of discrimination, may serve as an indicator of shared fate within adoptive families.

The Present Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate associations of adoptive parent racial colorblindness with discrimination that the adopted adolescent experiences from the perspective of the (transnational, transracial) adopted Korean adolescent and their adoptive parents. We were interested in how racial colorblindness toward one's child may be associated with discrimination across time as well as between adoptive parent and adopted adolescent reports of the adolescent's experiences of discrimination. We sought to extend the literature related to the relationship between parent racial colorblindness and parent and adolescent reports of discrimination, specifically by targeting how adoptive parents perceive their own children.

We had three overarching research questions. First, does parent racial colorblindness or discrimination differ between childhood and adolescence? Second, do parent and adolescent reports of adolescent experiences of discrimination align? Third, are assessments of parent racial colorblindness, approximately 7 years apart, associated with parent or adolescent reports of discrimination? We expected that parent reports of discrimination would increase over time and that parent racial colorblindness toward the child would decrease over time, as has been found in previous research (Crolley-Simic & Vonk, 2011). However, as the extant literature on inconsistencies in reports of discrimination within adoptive families is limited, we did not develop hypotheses for our other research questions.

Method

Procedure

The present study utilized data from time points 1 (T1) and 2 (T2) of the Korean Adoption Project, which is a longitudinal study examining the experiences of transracially, transnationally adopted Korean Americans and their adoptive parents. Data from T1 were collected between March 2007 and February 2008. Data from T2 were collected between March 2014 and June 2014. Participants were recruited from a research registry of adoptive families with transracially adopted children nationwide but primarily in the Midwestern and Eastern United States. To be eligible to participate in the study, families needed to have at least one child who was (a) adopted from Korea and (b) between the ages of 5 and 18 years old.

At T1, one adoptive parent from each family completed a survey that reported on the adoptive parents and each adopted Korean child in the target age range (i.e., if a family had two children between 5 and 18 years old, then the parent completed two separate surveys). Each adolescent between the ages of 13 and 18 years old at T1 completed a survey as well. Adoptive parents provided consent for themselves and children under the age of consent; children under the age of consent provided assent. Seven years later (T2), families who had completed the T1 survey and who had an adopted Korean child between the ages of 5 and 12 at T1 were asked to participate in a follow-up survey. The T2 procedure followed the T1 procedure. Notably, the adopted adolescents who were now 13–18 years old at T2 completed their own self-report surveys at T2 (see the full procedure in Hu et al., 2017). This study was approved by the University of Minnesota's Institutional Review Board. We report herein only on the parent–child dyads for whom we had parent report data at T1 and parent–adolescent data at T2, and the overall retention rate was approximately 55% between T1 and T2; however, there were no significant differences in demographic characteristics between participants who did and did not complete the study at both time points (see Hu et al., 2017, for additional information).

Participants

Children

There were 118 parent–adolescent dyads who had completed surveys at T1 (parent only) and T2 (parent and adolescent). The final sample of adopted individuals comprises 80 Korean American adolescents (51.7% male and 48.3% female).² At T1, participants were between 7 and 13 years old at T1 ($M = 9.43$, $SD = 1.70$) and between 13 and 20 years old at T2 ($M = 16.28$, $SD = 1.75$). The average age of adoption was 8 months ($M = 7.86$, $SD = 5.17$), with the majority (90.5%) adopted before 12 months old.

Parents

In contrast, the final sample of adoptive parents comprised 80 adoptive parents (82.2% female and 17.8% male).³ While the adolescent children were more evenly split between male and female, adoptive parents overwhelmingly identified as female and mothers. Adoptive parents were on average 53 years old ($M = 53.41$, $SD = 4.37$) at T2. The majority of parents identified as White (98.3%), with two Korean American parents (1.7%) who had White spouses. Additionally, most parents were married (97.5%). In terms of education, 83.7% of adoptive parents reported having a bachelor's or higher degree, 13.0% reported an associate degree (or other 2-year degree) or attending some college, and 3.3% reported a high school degree or lower. Furthermore, 53.8% reported an income of \$126,000 or more, 35.9% incomes between \$76,000 and \$125,000, and 10.3% an income of \$75,000 or lower.

Measures

Racial Colorblindness

We assessed adoptive parents' racial colorblindness using a researcher-designed measure intended for this study. The parental racial colorblindness scale examines how White adoptive parents recognize and acknowledge their own child's ethnicity and race.

This emphasis on the adoptive parents' perceptions of adopted youth in their family differentiates this scale from other measures of racial colorblindness, which tend to address colorblind attitudes about society or people in general (e.g., Neville et al., 2000). The survey development team created the items based on feedback and questions that the senior author and research team received from adopted individuals and adoptive parents at community events in and around Minneapolis, Minnesota. Adoption scholars who identify as transracially adopted people themselves reviewed the items for both scope and cultural sensitivity. The scale comprises four items (two reverse-scored; $\alpha_{W1} = .70$, $\alpha_{W2} = .78$). The measure at T1 was scored on a Likert-type scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). The measure at T2 was scored on a Likert-type scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 4 (*strongly agree*). A neutral response option was removed from the Racial Colorblindness measure at T2 to adjust for response fatigue and to better align with best practice recommendations that indicate neutral response (e.g., 3 = *neither agree nor disagree*) options provide minimal statistical utility. We created scores by averaging items, with higher scores indicating more racial colorblindness. See Supplemental Materials for a description of all four items.

An exploratory factor analysis using maximum likelihood extraction with an oblique rotation was conducted to estimate factor loadings of the items for the sample. An oblique rotation was selected due to our hypotheses that the factors could be correlated. First, to determine how many components to retain, a parallel analysis was conducted to compare the scree of factors of the observed data with that of a random data matrix of the same size as the original. The results of the parallel analysis scree test indicated that we should examine one-, two-, and three-factor solutions for scale validation. A one-factor model demonstrated the best fit (root-mean-squared residual = .05, Tucker–Lewis index = .86, root-mean-square error of approximation = .13), $\chi^2(2, N = 411) = 15.22$, $p < .001$. Factor 1 accounted for 38% of the total variance and was comprised of Items 1 through 4 (e.g., “I often remind myself that I am raising a Korean child” and “I am mindful that *Child Name* is an ethnic and racial minority”). Factor loadings for each item ranged from 0.51 to 0.72.

Discrimination

Adoptive parent and adopted individual reports of the discrimination that the adopted person experienced were assessed using the perceived discrimination scale, an ad hoc measure developed by the survey team. The perceived discrimination scale is a nine-item (no reverse-scored items) measure of racial discrimination that is similar to the brief discrimination scale⁴ (J. P. Lee et al., 2015). Adoptive parent report ($\alpha_{W1} = .88$, $\alpha_{W2} = .91$) and adopted individual report ($\alpha = .87$; T2 only) items differed only in the subject of the item referencing either “your child” or “I.” An example item is “[Your child has/I have] been teased or made fun of because of [his/her/my] ethnicity/race.” Items were scored on a Likert-type scale from 1 (*never*) to 4 (*often*). We created scores by averaging the

² At the inception of this study, assigned sex at birth, rather than gender identity was assessed. This is a potential limitation of our study.

³ Based on the wording of the survey, we are unable to determine whether the parents who completed the survey were the same across time points. For example, a parent may have experienced a divorce and remarried or transitioned to another gender identity; this is a potential limitation of our study.

⁴ The perceived discrimination scale was created and implemented at T1 before the brief discrimination scale was created.

items, with higher scores indicating more discrimination. For more information on the factor structure of the discrimination scale, see J. P. Lee et al. (2015). See Supplemental Materials for additional information on this measure.

Positionality Statement

The authors in this article include those who identify as (nonadoptive) parents, adopted persons (or members of adoptive families), and/or Asian American. The first author is Asian American and from a multiracial family; they are not an adopted individual. The second author is Asian American and not an adopted individual. The third, fourth, and sixth authors are Korean Americans who were transracially adopted and raised in White families. The fifth author is a White American who was raised in an adoptive family and is a sibling to a transracially, transnationally adopted person who is Asian American. The last author is a nonadopted second-generation Korean American from an immigrant family who is married to an adopted Korean American.

Data Analytic Plan

All analyses were conducted using R (R Core Team, 2019). An attrition analysis was conducted comparing the adoptive parents who completed both T1 and T2 data collections (respondents; $n = 80$) with those parents who only participated (nonrespondents) on the key study variables for attrition analysis. There were no significant differences between respondents and nonrespondents on parent age, sex, ethnicity, education level, or income. To allow for more direct comparisons between regression coefficients, all study variables were standardized before analyses (Siegel & Wagner, 2022) by subtracting the mean of the original variable from the raw value and then dividing it by the standard deviation of the original variable (i.e., z -score standardization). Because each scale is measured in different units, it is not possible to make direct comparisons between unstandardized regression coefficients in a model (Siegel & Wagner, 2022). Standardizing the variables before conducting a linear regression will address this problem by expressing the coefficients in terms of standard deviation. For example, a β value of 2.13 would indicate that a change of 1 SD in the independent variable resulted in 2.13 SD increases in the dependent variable (Nimon & Oswald, 2013).

We first present descriptive statistics on our variables of interest. Following this, we conducted paired and two-sample t tests to investigate potential differences across time in racial colorblindness

and discrimination toward the adopted child among parents, as well as between parent and adolescent reports of discrimination. Next, we conducted product-moment correlations to assess associations across our variables of interest. We then conducted multiple linear regression (MLR) analyses to assess whether racial colorblindness was associated with parent and adolescent reports of discrimination across time. Last, we conducted a post hoc exploratory analysis to examine the degree to which parent racial colorblindness is associated with the discrepancy between parent and adolescent reports of discrimination. A discrepancy score was calculated by subtracting parent reports from child reports (i.e., child–parent). A positive score indicated that children reported more perceived discrimination than parents. A negative score indicated that parents reported more perceived discrimination than their children.

Results

Paired Sample t Tests

As it pertains to our first research question (i.e., do parent reports of colorblindness toward their own child and discrimination change over time?), we found that parent-reported discrimination significantly increased from T1 to T2, $t(78) = -7.86, p < .001, d = .76$ (large effect), and parent racial colorblindness did not significantly differ from T1 to T2, $t(77) = -0.16, p = .875, d = .02$. Adolescent- and parent-reported discrimination toward the adopted child did not significantly differ, $t(157) = 1.43, p = .154, d = .23$.

Correlations

Table 1 presents the correlation matrix, including the means and standard deviations, for all study variables. Parent racial colorblindness at T2 was not significantly correlated with parent-reported discrimination toward the adopted child at T1, $r = -.14, p = .225$, but parent racial colorblindness at T2 was significantly correlated with parent-reported discrimination at T2, $r = -.36, p = .001$ (medium effect). On average, parents who reported greater racial colorblindness also reported less discrimination toward their adopted child. In addition, parent racial colorblindness at T2 correlated significantly with adolescent-reported discrimination, $r = -.19, p = .042$ (small effect).

Multiple Linear Regressions

Our first MLR, which regressed parent-reported discrimination toward their child onto parent racial colorblindness at T1 and T2,

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics and Correlations for Study Variables

Variable	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Perceived discrimination (parent, T1)	80	1.59	0.47	—					
2. Perceived discrimination (parent, T2)	79	2.00	0.60	.63***	—				
3. Perceived discrimination (adopted child, T2)	80	1.87	0.59	.28*	.32**	—			
4. Perceived discrimination difference (child minus parent)	79	-0.12	0.69	-.28*	-.60***	.57***	—		
5. Colorblind attitudes (parent, T1)	78	3.47	0.75	-.22*	-.34**	.00	.30**	—	
6. Colorblind attitudes (parent, T2)	80	2.56	0.62	-.14	-.36**	-.29**	.09	.38***	—

Note. T = time.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

was statistically significant, $R^2 = .14$ (large effect), $F(2, 71) = 6.74$, $p = .002$. Specifically, parents' racial colorblindness at T1, $B = -.24$, $t(71) = -2.00$, $p = .049$, and parent racial colorblindness at T2, $B = -.27$, $t(71) = -2.13$, $p = .037$, were significantly associated with parent-reported discrimination toward their child at T2. Greater parent racial colorblindness at both time points was associated with lower parent-reported discrimination that their child faced in adolescence (Table 2).

Our second MLR (and second research question; i.e., do parent and adolescent reports of discrimination align?), which regressed parent-reported discrimination at T2 onto adolescent-reported discrimination at T2 and parent racial colorblindness at T1 and T2, was significant, $R^2 = .20$ (large effect), $F(3, 70) = 6.98$, $p < .001$. Specifically, adolescent-reported discrimination was significantly and positively associated with parent-reported discrimination, $B = .27$, $t(70) = 2.54$, $p = .014$. Additionally, parent racial colorblindness at T1 was significantly and negatively associated with parent-reported discrimination, $B = -.28$, $t(70) = -2.36$, $p = .021$, but parent racial colorblindness at T2 was not significantly associated with parent-reported discrimination, $B = -.18$, $t(70) = -1.44$, $p = .155$. That is, greater adolescent-reported discrimination was associated with greater parent-reported discrimination. Further, greater parent racial colorblindness T1 was associated with lower parent-reported discrimination at T2 (Table 3).

Our third MLR (and third research question; i.e., does parent-reported discrimination and racial colorblindness toward their child predict adolescent-reported discrimination?), which regressed adolescent-reported discrimination onto parent-reported discrimination at T2 and parent racial colorblindness at T1 and T2, was significant, $R^2 = .11$ (medium effect), $F(3, 70) = 4.16$, $p = .009$. Only parent-reported discrimination was significantly and positively associated with adolescent-reported discrimination, $B = .31$, $t(70) = 2.54$, $p = .014$, while parent racial colorblindness at T1, $B = .20$, $t(70) = 1.59$, $p = .116$, and T2, $B = -.24$, $t(70) = -1.76$, $p = .083$, were not significant (Table 4).

Post Hoc Analyses

We regressed the difference between adolescent-reported discrimination and parent-reported discrimination onto parent racial colorblindness at T1 and T2 (to comprehensively address the possibility of whether parent racial colorblindness is associated with the discrepancy between parent and adolescent reports of discrimination).⁵ The

Table 2
Regression Results: Parent Perceived Discrimination Predicted by Parent Colorblind Attitudes

Predictor	B^a	SE	95% CI		t	p
			LL	UL		
Intercept	-.03	.11	-.21	.19	-.27	.789
Colorblind attitudes (parents, T1)	-.24	.12	-.48	-.001	-2.00	.047
Colorblind attitudes (parents, T2)	-.27	.13	-.52	-.02	-2.13	.037

Note. SE = standard error; CI = confidence interval; LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit; T = time.

^aRepresents the standardized regression coefficient.

overall model was statistically significant, $R^2 = .06$ (medium effect), $F(2, 71) = 3.38$, $p = .040$. Specifically, parents' racial colorblindness at T1, $B = -.32$, $t(71) = -2.50$, $p = .015$, was significantly associated with a larger difference between parent- and child-reported discrimination. Parents who reported greater racial colorblindness at T1 reported less perceived discrimination toward their children at T2 compared to children's self-reported perceived discrimination at T2 (Table 5). However, parent racial colorblindness at T2 was not significantly associated with the difference between adolescent and parent-reported discrimination, $B = -.04$, $t(71) = -.27$, $p = .790$. See Figure 1 for a histogram illustrating the distribution of difference scores.

Discussion

This study highlights racialized family dynamics in transracial, transnational adoptive families with adopted Korean adolescents. We had three overarching research questions, which investigated different aspects of our variables of interest (i.e., parent racial colorblindness, and parent- or adolescent-reported experiences of discrimination) such as stability across a 7-year period, potential discrepancies at T2, whether associations were present across time, and associations between parent racial colorblindness and discrepant reports of discrimination. Our results provide mixed support for our hypotheses and shed light on the contradictions between parent- and adolescent-reported discrimination. These findings advance our understanding of racialized family dynamics and potential indicators of parent-child communication inconsistencies.

Research has found that adoptive parents' racial colorblindness decreases (Crolley-Simic & Vonk, 2011) or increases (Bergquist et al., 2003) over time, which we did not find in our study. Instead, parent's racial colorblindness toward their child was stable across a 7-year period. One possibility for this discrepancy is that other research has assessed racial colorblindness more broadly, whereas our work investigated parents' perceptions of their own children. This discrepancy is especially concerning given that racial colorblindness toward one's own child likely predicts negative child outcomes to a greater degree than broader assessments of racial colorblindness. However, parent and adolescent reports of discrimination did not significantly differ from one another, which may suggest fewer inconsistencies in reporting. Further, parent racial colorblindness was negatively associated with parent reports of discrimination (at T1). There was also further evidence of this in our first MLR analyses (Table 2). Specifically, parent racial colorblindness at both time points was negatively associated with parent-reported discrimination.

Our finding that discrimination increased over time may be explained by the possibility that parents witness adopted children experiencing microaggressions or their adopted child asks questions they had never considered (e.g., a child asking why they are treated differently from their peers; Killian & Khanna, 2019). Another factor might be that their adopted child begins to question and show interest in their adoption history and racial-ethnic heritage as they enter middle childhood (Baden et al., 2012) and adolescence. As parents realize this, they face several options such as expressing racial colorblindness and suppressing children's interests or

⁵ These analyses are listed as post hoc and exploratory as they were originally suggested by a reviewer to provide a more comprehensive understanding of parent racial colorblindness and reports of discrimination.

Table 3

Regression Results: Parent Perceived Discrimination Predicted by Adopted Child's Perceived Discrimination and Parent Colorblind Attitudes

Predictor	<i>B</i> ^a	<i>SE</i>	95% CI		<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
			<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>		
Intercept	-.04	.10	-.25	.16	-.41	.684
Perceived discrimination (adopted child, T2)	.27	.11	.06	.49	2.54	.014
Colorblind attitudes (parents, T1)	-.28	.12	-.51	-.04	-2.36	.021
Colorblind attitudes (parents, T2)	-.18	.13	-.44	.07	-1.44	.155

Note. *SE* = standard error; *CI* = confidence interval; *LL* = lower limit; *UL* = upper limit; *T* = time.

^aRepresents the standardized regression coefficient.

proactively working with their child to expose them to their cultural background and prepare them to cope with discrimination.

Our findings also complicate the relationship between parent- and adolescent-reported discrimination. Specifically, when parent racial colorblindness toward their children was included in the model, adolescent-reported discrimination was associated with parent-reported discrimination (Table 3). This suggests that parent racial colorblindness (at T1) toward their children likely plays a role in parent-child communication related to race, as parent- and adolescent-reported discrimination was otherwise not significantly associated with one another.

Although parent perceived discrimination toward their children was associated with adolescent-reported discrimination, this was not the case for parent racial colorblindness (Table 4). We also found that parent racial colorblindness (at T1) was associated with greater discrepancy scores between parent- and adolescent-reported discrimination (Table 5). This may suggest that parents are unaware of their racial colorblindness and that adopted youth are taking these attitudes into consideration when deciding whether to disclose discriminatory experiences. This interpretation is, in part, supported by qualitative and mixed-methods research, finding that adopted Asian American youth do not always feel understood by their White adoptive parents because they have not experienced race-based prejudice (Kim et al., 2013; Reynolds (Taewon Choi) et al., 2021). This inconsistency may also be understood through shared fate theory (Lo et al., 2021). If parent racial colorblindness is an indicator

of a rupture in parent-child communication, then racial colorblindness may also indicate a lack of belief in a shared fate among family members. However, inferences from our study results should be taken with caution as our assessment of parent-child communication quality in the context of racial discrimination was outside the scope of this study and therefore a limitation. For instance, we are unable to investigate how parents perceive discrimination that their children experience when they witness the discriminatory experience rather than broader perceptions of their child's experiences.

While certain parents may believe that there is racial equality in the United States, there may be dissonance between their beliefs about race broadly and beliefs about their adopted child's experiences. This positive association, however, does not discount the possibility that racial colorblindness is an indicator of communication rupture within the family as adolescents may report discrimination if the experience is severe enough, leading to a reduced association but one that still exists. If parents are unable to engage with their child's birth culture or race in a meaningful way, then the impact of parent racial colorblindness on the family system may increase over time (Zhou et al., 2021). With rising numbers of Asian Americans reporting experiences of prejudice or bias (Chen et al., 2020), understanding racial colorblindness among primarily White parents with Asian American children is needed.

Other constructs and processes, such as identity centrality and how racial attitudes are passed from parent to child, are also considerations when studying the experiences of Asian American youth. Identity centrality may be associated with racial colorblindness and perceptions of discrimination given that the degree to which one's identity is important to them, will influence their perceptions of race (Baden et al., 2012). Further, colorblind attitudes, as with identity centrality, are influenced and shaped in a reciprocal process such that colorblindness in parents may be promoted in children (Chang et al., 2017; Kim et al., 2013). Assessment of these constructs may also explain our findings related to associations of colorblindness and perceptions of discrimination in multiracial families, such as those with White parents and Korean American youth. Thus, future research should consider these constructs in addition to the inclusion of multiple reporters to comprehensively understand racial socialization processes.

Limitations

This study comes with several limitations. To begin, this work may not generalize to all transracial adoptive families but rather only to families who formed their families via transnational adoptions

Table 4

Regression Results: Adopted Child's Perceived Discrimination Predicted by Parent Perceived Discrimination and Parent Colorblind Attitudes

Predictor	<i>B</i> ^a	<i>SE</i>	95% CI		<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
			<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>		
Intercept	.06	.11	-.16	.28	.53	.597
Perceived discrimination (parent, T2)	.31	.12	.07	.55	2.54	.014
Colorblind attitudes (parents, T1)	.20	.13	-.05	.46	1.59	.116
Colorblind attitudes (parents, T2)	-.24	.13	-.50	.03	-1.76	.083

Note. *SE* = standard error; *CI* = confidence interval; *LL* = lower limit; *UL* = upper limit; *T* = time.

^aRepresents the standardized regression coefficient.

Table 5

Regression Results: Differences in Perceived Discrimination Between Parents and Children Predicted by Parent Colorblind Attitudes

Predictor	B ^a	SE	95% CI		t	p
			LL	UL		
Intercept	-.02	.11	-.20	.25	.22	.826
Colorblind attitudes (parents, T1)	.32	.13	.07	.57	2.50	.015
Colorblind attitudes (parents, T2)	-.04	.13	-.30	.23	-.27	.790

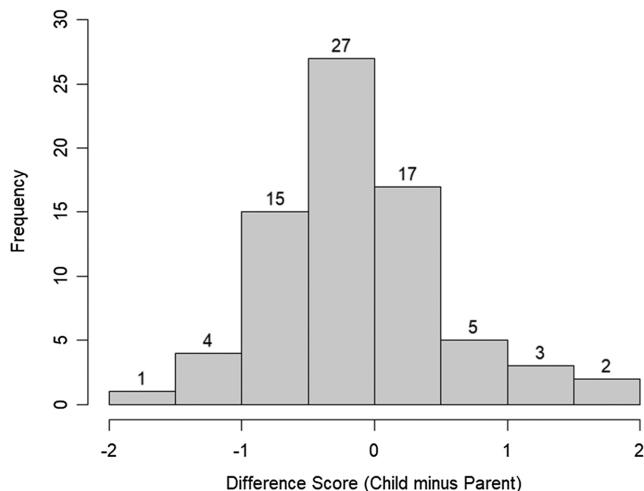
Note. SE = standard error; CI = confidence interval; LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit; T = time.

^aRepresents the standardized regression coefficient.

from Korea. However, these findings still provide a direction for future research with these populations. Understanding the relationship of parent racial colorblindness toward one's child and reports of discrimination needs further study. Additional forms of diversity, such as socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, gender identity, and other pathways to parenthood, are also lacking in our sample. There are also moderators that could explain the relationships in our study, such as an adolescent's own racial colorblindness, the presence of other siblings, neighborhood racial composition, and

Figure 1

Distribution of Perceived Discrimination Difference Scores (Child Minus Parent)



Note. The histogram illustrates the distribution of difference scores for perceived discrimination calculated by subtracting parent reports at Time 2 from child reports at Time 2 (child minus parent). Perceived discrimination was measured on a scale from 1 (*never*) to 4 (*often*). Therefore, difference scores could range from -3 to 3. A negative score signifies that a parent perceived more discrimination than their children, while a positive score signifies that children perceived more discrimination than their parents. A zero score denotes identical reports from both parents and children. The numbers atop each bar indicate the count of observations within that section.

other racial socialization processes in the household. Further, our work only focused on racial colorblindness and discrimination. The inclusion of other child outcomes may provide information on the impact of colorblindness on adolescents over time, which should be rectified in future research. In addition, these data were collected prior to the COVID-19 pandemic; more recent data would be beneficial in understanding how colorblind attitudes and discrimination have changed over time. Another limitation is our inability to investigate *why* adolescent- and parent-reported discrimination do not show the same relationship with parent racial colorblindness, as our data were quantitative.

Conclusion

Our findings indicate a complex relationship among parent racial colorblindness, discrimination, and discrepancies in reports (i.e., parent or adolescent) in transracial adoptive families with adopted Korean American youth. There is a need for greater cultural competency and training among White adoptive parents given the stability of parent racial colorblindness and differences between parents and adopted adolescents in reports of discrimination experienced by the adolescent. Future research should connect racial colorblindness and inconsistencies in reports of discrimination to potential health outcomes or coping mechanisms among transracially adopted adolescents. Parent racial colorblindness toward their own children is a much-needed area of research, as noted by our findings of stability in colorblindness and inconsistencies between adolescent- and parent-reported discrimination that adopted Korean American adolescents face. Given the increase in anti-Asian American attitudes and discrimination in the United States, understanding how racism manifests among parents with Asian American children is of utmost importance.

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Received December 12, 2022

Revision received February 20, 2024

Accepted April 19, 2024 ■