Sex Roles (2011) 65:397–409
DOI 10.1007/s11199-011-0019-0

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Daily Hassles and African American Adolescent Females' Psychological Functioning: Direct and Interactive Associations with Gender Role Orientation

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Published online: 14 June 2011

Abstract Given that stressors may accumulate across the life span, the extent to which daily hassles are associated with African American females' psychological functioning during the adolescent years remains an important question. Understanding the potential impact of daily hassles is important due to indications that African American women report greater daily hassles and have higher incidence rates of stress-related disorders. The current study examines the relationship between daily hassles and psychological functioning (e.g., depression and anxiety symptoms) among 103 U.S. African American adolescent females (M=15.50; SD=1.70) residing in a moderately-sized Midwestern city. Additionally, this investigation explores gender role orientation as a moderator of this relationship. Results indicated that increased daily hassles were associated with greater depressive and anxiety symptoms. Also, this investigation provides some support for the direct and moderating role of gender role orientation. A greater feminine or androgynous role orientation was associated with fewer depressive and anxiety symptoms. In addition, although not directly associated, this investigation indicated that a masculine role orientation moderated the association between daily hassles and girls' psychological outcomes. Specifically, among African American adolescent females with a greater masculine role orientation, increased daily hassles were associated with reduced psychological functioning (e.g., greater depressive and anxiety symptoms). Neither feminine nor androgynous role orientation, however, moderated the relationship between daily hassles and psychological functioning (e.g., depressive and anxiety symptoms). Implications of findings are discussed.

Keywords African American · Adolescents · Females · Daily hassles · Gender role orientation · Psychological functioning

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Introduction

Stress has been defined as a relationship between an individual and environment that is appraised as relevant to personal well-being and in which the individual's resources are challenged (cf. Folkman and Lazarus 1985, p. 152). Several studies have demonstrated linkages between various stressors and African American females' psychological functioning (e.g., Dailey 2009; Murry et al. 2008; Thomas and González-Prendes 2009; Waite and Killian 2007; Warren 1997). This work has been propelled by indications that African American adult females have higher incidence rates of stress-related disorders (Jackson and Sears 1992; cf. Townsend et al. 2007). Given these higher incidence rates, the origins of stressors as well as the extent to which they impact psychological functioning are of critical importance. In particular, scholars have articulated the potential psychological impact of routine day-to-day stressors that may disrupt one's daily routine or life, often referred to as *daily hassles* (Almeida 2005). Investigations have demonstrated that daily hassles are associated with decreased psychological functioning among African American women (e.g.,

Grote et al. 2007; Murry et al. 2008; Woods-Giscombé 2010; Townsend et al. 2007).

Research has indicated that stressors may emerge early and continue to accumulate into adulthood (Brown et al. 2007). Thus, African American females' stress experiences during the adolescent years and potential associations with psychological outcomes are an important consideration. However, although studies have demonstrated that, in comparison to boys, girls across various racial groups have increased psychological risk (e.g., Hankin et al. 2007), relatively few studies have examined correlates of African American adolescent girls' psychological functioning. However, the preponderance of the existing research has not distinguished between African American adolescent females' stress experiences and subsequent mental health outcomes from other sub-groups of adolescent females or African American adolescent males. As a result, relatively little is known about within-group variation in experienced contextual stressors or how they relate to the psychological functioning of African American adolescent females. The current investigation, in an attempt to close existing gaps in the literature, explores the association between daily hassles and psychological functioning among a sample of African American adolescent females residing in the Mid-Western region of the United States. Additionally, as research has sought to identify a range of individual and situational characteristics that may mitigate the negative psychological impact of daily hassles, this investigation utilizes the stress-buffering hypothesis (Cohen and Wills 1985; Cohen and Mckay 1984) to examine the direct and moderating role of gender role orientation (e.g., masculinity, femininity, androgyny).

Daily Hassles and Psychological Functioning

Although much of the literature has focused on understanding the relationship between stressful life events (e.g., death of a loved one) and psychological functioning (e.g., Bohon et al. 2008; Cutrona et al. 2005; Ge et al. 1994; Ge et al. 2006), research conducted with primarily U.S. samples have pointed to the influence of daily-occurring stressors on psychological functioning (Delongis et al. 1982; Grzywacz et al. 2004). These daily-occurring stressors, or daily hassles, have been conceptualized as "routine challenges of day-to-day living that often are unexpected small occurrences that disrupt one's daily routine or life (Almeida 2005, p.64)." Moreover, scholars have asserted that daily hassles may lend more insight into the relationship between stress and psychological adjustment (Luthar and Zigler 1991; cf. Miller et al. 2002).

An additional assertion is that daily hassles are specific to one's social context. In particular, investigations have included daily hassles from multiple domains, including those originating from family, work/school, and neighborhood contexts (e.g., Anthony and Nicotera 2008; Delongis et al. 1982; Mayberry and Graham 2001; Rollins et al. 2002). Furthermore, work with adolescent populations has demonstrated similar, albeit developmentally-appropriate dimensions (Compas et al. 1987; Seidman et al. 2003; Miller et al. 2002). Given the increased mental health risk for females (in comparison to males) during adolescence (e.g., Hankin et al. 2007), daily hassles may be an important step toward understanding adolescent females' short and long-term psychological functioning (Elgar et al. 2003; Pinquart 2009). Much of this work, however, has been conducted with primarily White or multi-ethnic samples in which group differences were not explored. Thus, variation in American females' stress experiences during the adolescent years merits additional attention.

Sociocultural Factors

In understanding associations among daily hassles, gender role orientation and psychological functioning within a sample of African American adolescent females, it is important to take into account sociocultural factors (Cole 2009; Sanders and Bradley 2005). Thus, the current investigation includes socio-economic background and age as study control variables.

Socio-economic Background

Studies have suggested that the intersection between race and class have important implications for African American females' social experiences and subsequent mental health outcomes (e.g., Keith and Brown 2010; Szymanski and Stewart 2010). In particular, research has indicated that African American females from lower socioeconomic backgrounds may be at an increased likelihood for stress exposure (e.g., Siefert et al. 2007). Specifically, in explanation of these relationships, studies have shown that African American women from lower socioeconomic backgrounds (in comparisons to those from higher socioeconomic backgrounds) may have fewer personal and social resources available in the face of a stressful occurrence (e.g., Jackson and Mustillo 2001).

Age

Investigations with African American samples have demonstrated that older females report fewer daily hassles than younger females (Zauszniewski et al. 2005). Moreover, in support of this finding, additional studies with this population have suggested that older, women in comparison to younger women may have greater resources for coping

with a range of stressors (e.g., Ward and Heidrich 2009; Zauszniewski et al. 2005). Recent work with African American adolescent girls also suggests that age may be an important background factor for understanding stress experiences (Slater et al. 2001). Given that the study sample includes participants ranging from the early/mid to late adolescent years (12–17 years of age), we also acknowledge that there may be variation among the explored relationships and control for age in our analyses.

Daily Hassles and African American Adolescent Females' Psychological Functioning

Research has indicated that membership to a racial/ethnic group (Choi et al. 2006; Luthar and Zigler 1991) and gender (Hankin et al. 2007) are associated with increased stressors. Thus, scholars have noted the importance of identifying stressors and the subsequent psychological impact among African American women (Woods-Giscombé 2010; Warren 1997). Studies have explored stress as a contributing factor to physical and mental health outcomes among African American women (e.g., Beauboeuf-Lafontant 2007; McCallum et al. 2002; Townsend et al. 2007; Woods-Giscombe and Lobel 2008). Among studies specific to daily hassles, investigations have demonstrated the negative impact of daily-occurring stressors on African American women's psychological functioning (Townsend et al. 2007; Watts-Jones 1990; Zauszniewski et al. 2005). Despite the contributions of this work, there has been relatively little attention given to African American adolescent females' stress experiences and potential associations with their psychological functioning.

An important rationale for studies that attend to age or developmental stage is that daily hassles may emerge relatively early in the life course, particularly during adolescence. Further, the psychological impact of these hassles can compromise psychological functioning throughout the life span. Recent investigations indicating that changes in African American females' depressive symptomatology from adolescence to young adulthood can be explained by varying levels of stress supports this assertion (Brown et al. 2007). Thus, the extent to which daily hassles are associated with African American females' psychological adjustment during the adolescent years remains an important question. In one of the few existing studies that has explored daily hassles among African American adolescent females, Guthrie and colleagues (2001) found that increased daily hassles were associated with less positive health behaviors among adolescent girls residing in the Midwestern U.S. Also, additional research has demonstrated an inverse relationship between increased stress and African American adolescent girls' health outcomes (e.g., Guthrie et al. 2002). However, there has been little focus on how daily hassles are associated with the psychological functioning of African American adolescent females. The current study seeks to address this gap by exploring the association between adolescent daily hassles and psychological functioning among a sample of U.S. African American adolescent females.

African American Adolescent Females' Gender Role Orientation: Direct and Moderating Roles

Gender role orientation has been defined as one's identification with gender-typed personality traits and characteristics (Strough et al. 2007). Specifically, studies have suggested that gender role orientation is comprised of two independent domains, masculinity (e.g., masculine-typed personality traits) and femininity (e.g., feminine-typed personality traits) (Bem 1983). Moreover, gender role orientation may be androgynous, which is characterized by an integration of relatively high masculine and feminine traits (Bem 1985; Strough et al. 2007). Scholars have asserted that one's gender role orientation has important implications for mental health-related outcomes (Nolen-Hoeksema and Girgus 1994; Nolen-Hoeksema 2001). Specifically, investigations primarily samples composed of females from various age and ethnic backgrounds, have demonstrated that a greater masculine and androgynous is associated with greater psychological well-being among adult (Saunders and Kashubeck-West 2006) and adolescent females (Barrett and White 2002). Despite articulations that a greater feminine role orientation increases psychological risk, this association has not been borne out in the literature as studies of adult (Bromberger and Matthews 1996) and adolescent females (e.g., Barrett and White 2002; Muris et al. 2005; Priess et al. 2009; Wisdom et al. 2007) have demonstrated inconsistent findings.

To date, however, there is a paucity of documented studies that have examined African American girls' gender role orientation and associations with their adjustment outcomes. Attention to this population is of specific interest due to assertions that there is variation in how gender is constructed and enacted within African American communities (Collins 1998; Konrad and Harris 2002; Harris 1996; Hill 2002; Nobles 1985). Much of the existing work in this area has explored the relationship between gender role orientation and health risk behaviors. In particular, research by Belgrave, Van Oss Marin, and Chambers (2000) and Townsend (2002) indicated that a greater masculine role orientation is associated with increased sexual risk behaviors and attitudes among African American adolescent girls. Although relatively few studies exist, research with female-only (e.g., Buckley and Carter 2005) and samples including both males and females (e.g., Palapattu et al. 2006) have suggested that a greater masculine role

orientation is associated with positive psychological outcomes among African American adolescents. Additionally, researchers have asserted that, due to distinct socio-historical experiences that have shaped gender roles in the African American community, the socialization of African American females emphasizes androgynous characteristics (e.g., integration of both masculine and feminine characteristics; Corneille et al. 2005; Binion 1990; Harris 1993; Harris 1996; Molloy and Herzberger 1998). Further, an androgynous orientation has been associated with greater psychological functioning among adult and adolescent populations of African American females (Buckley and Carter 2005; Littlefield 2003).

Similar to the larger literature, the literature regarding feminine role orientation has been equivocal. Some studies including both African American females and males have found no direct association with feminine role orientation and psychological functioning (e.g., Lyons et al. 2006). Further, research with African American male and female youth (e.g., Palapattu et al. 2006) has shown a negative relationship with psychological outcomes. These studies, though, are not generalizable fully to African American female samples. Among the small number of studies with African American adolescent female samples, there is some suggestion that a greater feminine role orientation is associated with positive adolescent adjustment (e.g., happiness and satisfaction) (Buckley and Carter 2005). Investigations with adult samples also support this relationship (Littlefield 2003). Still, studies with African American females have indicated that a greater feminine role orientation is associated with negative psychological outcomes (e.g., Napholz 1994). However, given the inconsistent pattern of this research, the nature of the relationship between feminine role orientation and African American adolescent females' psychological functioning is not fully understood.

In addition to direct associations with psychological functioning, one's identification with or orientation to a social group may mitigate the psychological impact of stress (Cohen and McKay 1984; Lazarus and Folkman 1984; Cohen and Wills 1985; Roos and Cohen 1987). There is some evidence that gender role orientation moderates the relation between stress and psychological functioning. Towbes et al. (1989) found that a masculine gender role orientation (e.g., instrumentality) buffered the effects of stressful life events and anxiety among a multiethnic sample of high school females. More recently, studies have explored the moderating role of gender role orientation with ethnically-diverse samples. For example, Lam and McBride-Chang (2007) found that a greater masculine role orientation reduced the negative impact of stress on interpersonal functioning among Chinese American adolescents. Still, no known studies have explored the extent to which gender role orientation may moderate the association between daily hassles and African American adolescent females' psychological outcomes.

Goals of the Current Study

In an attempt to close existing gaps in the literature, the present study explores the association between daily hassles and depressive symptoms among a sample of African American adolescent females residing in the Midwestern region of the United States. In line with prior work (e.g., Crowther et al. 2001; Guthrie et al. 2001; Wagner and Compas 1990), we expect that increased daily hassles are associated with lower psychological functioning among African American adolescent females. This relationship will be assessed after controlling for participant age and socio-economic background. Because depression is one of the most commonly diagnosed mental health disorders among females, but often under-diagnosed and under-examined among African American females (e.g., Carrington 2006), this investigation uses depressive symptomatology as an indicator of psychological functioning. Also, because of the likelihood that depression is comorbid with anxiety disorders (e.g., Lamers et al. 2011), we also include anxiety symptomatology as an additional indicator of African American adolescent girls' psychological functioning. Moreover, this study explores the applicability of the stress-buffering hypothesis (Cohen and McKay 1984; Cohen and Wills 1985) by examining gender role orientation as an individual characteristic that moderates the association between daily hassles and African American adolescent females' psychological functioning. The specific hypotheses for this investigation are as follows:

Hypothesis 1: Greater daily hassles will be associated with reduced psychological functioning (increased depressive and anxiety symptoms).

Hypothesis 2: Based on the existing studies, we expect that African American adolescent females with a greater androgynous and masculine role orientation will report lower depressive and anxiety symptoms. However, given the equivocal nature of the literature, we make no a priori hypotheses regarding the relationship between feminine role orientation and psychological functioning.

Hypothesis 3: Gender role orientation will moderate the relationship between daily hassles and African American adolescent females' depressive and anxiety symptoms. We posit that a masculine and androgynous

gender role orientation will buffer the relationship between daily hassles and African American adolescent females' psychological functioning.

Method

Participants

This study is part of a larger, community-based investigation exploring contextual influences on African American girls' health behaviors (Guthrie 1995; see Guthrie et al. 2002). A nonrandom network sampling technique was used to collect data on adolescent girls. For the purposes of this study, only those sample participants who self-reported being African-American were included in the analyses (N=103). All participants resided in a mid-sized urban community. The mean age was 15.50 (SD=1.70) with ages ranging from 12 to 17 years. Ninety-four percent of participants were currently enrolled in school. Approximately 36% of the sample lived in households that received some form of public assistance (e.g., AFDC). Thirty-one percent of participants resided in a two-parent household.

Procedure

Survey instruments were selected and pilot tested on a sample of 24 adolescent girls who mirrored the proposed target population to determine their gender, ethnic, and age appropriateness. Based upon feedback from pilot study participants, refinements were made to improve questionnaire comprehension. Additionally, a question-by-question running glossary was added to provide definitions for terms that were unfamiliar or unknown to the target population. When needed, this glossary was utilized to clarify terms during administration of the survey questionnaire.

After obtaining human subjects approval through the University's Internal Review Board (IRB), fliers and posters were placed in various community-based agencies to recruit potential participants. Research staff communicated to potential participants that the purpose of this investigation was to explore contributors to adolescent girls' health behaviors. If adolescents expressed interest in participating, staff requested the adolescent's permission to call her legal parent or guardian to obtain initial consent for her participation. Once initial verbal assent and written consent were obtained from parents, a group administration (6–10 girls per group) of a self-report questionnaire that lasted approximately 1.5 hr was conducted at a local community center. To curtail any literacy issues, all survey questions were read aloud by a female research assistant. Given the sensitive nature of the survey questions (e.g., ethnic identity), all attempts were made to match survey administrators and participants by ethnicity. Additionally, all participants were instructed on the study's confidentiality protocol (e.g., assignment of ID numbers to provide additional anonymity). After completing the survey, adolescents were debriefed on the study goals. Participants were compensated with a $25 gift card after completion of the survey.

Measures

Adolescent Daily Hassles

Forty-one items were utilized from the Daily Hassles Questionnaire (DHQ; Rowlison and Felner 1988; Dubois et al. 1994. The DHQ, which is a self-report inventory of day-to-day concerns of children and adolescents, was modeled after the original Daily Hassle Scale commonly used for adults. Respondents were asked to rate on a four-point scale (0 = not at all a hassle; 3 = a very big hassle) the extent to which each item was a hassle during the past week. Sample items included: "trying to get good grades", "having to take care of brother/sister", and "not being part of the popular group." Previous studies have demonstrated that the Daily Hassles for Adolescents Scale has good construct validity with African American populations (Guthrie et al. 2001; Guthrie et al. 2002). Reliability for the current study was .92.

Gender Role Orientation

Masculinity and femininity were calculated using the Children's Sex Role Inventory-Short Version (CSRI-S). The CSRI-Swas adapted for use with child and adolescent populations by Boldizar (1991). The short version of this measure includes 10 masculine items (e.g., "I am a leader among my friends."), 10 feminine items (e.g., "I am a warm person."), and 10 neutral items (e.g., "People like me.") that were used as fillers. Respondents were asked to indicate how true each statement was on a 4-point scale (1 = not at all true; 4 = really true of me). The *masculinity* (alpha = .85) and *femininity* (alpha = .72) subscales were used for this investigation. Means for each dimension were computed by totaling the respective items and dividing by 10. Previous studies with African American adolescent female populations have demonstrated adequate reliability with this measure (e.g., Belgrave et al. 2000). Additionally, *androgyny* was calculated using the sum of girls' masculinity and femininity scores (Masculinity + Femininity). This calculation has been suggested as ideal as it provides continuous rather than categorical (e.g., high masculinity/high femininity) androgyny scores. Recent investigations have utilized this

method to represent an androgynous role orientation among adolescent samples (Strough et al. 2007).

Depressive Symptoms (Radloff 1977)

Level of depressive symptomatology was measured with the Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale (CES-D; Radloff 1977). Participants responded on a 4-point scale (1 = rarely/none of the time; 4 = most/all of the time) how true each statement was during the past week (e.g., I feel that everything I did was an effort; I feel like crying). Reliability for this 20-item scale was .90. Higher scores indicate greater depressive symptomatology. Studies have indicated that the CES-D is reliable and valid for use with adolescent populations (e.g., Roberts et al. 1990), including investigations with African American adolescent females (e.g., Franko et al. 2004).

Anxiety Symptoms (Spielberger et al. 1973)

The State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI) was used to measure anxiety-related symptoms. The STAI is composed of 2 subscales—1) state-anxiety (20 items) and 2) trait-anxiety (20 items). The trait subscale, which measures relatively stable anxiety symptoms (e.g., "I am worried."; I am preoccupied by disappointment."), was utilized for this investigation. Research has demonstrated that this subscale is associated with daily hassles (e.g., Roos and Cohen 1987). Based on previous investigations (e.g., Carter et al. 2001; Chapman and Woodruff-Borden 2009), this scale is appropriate for use with adolescent and ethnic populations. Responses were coded on a 4-point scale (1 = almost never; 4 = very often). Reliability for the trait-anxiety subscale was .89. Higher scores indicate more anxiety-related symptoms.

Control Variables

Participant age and financial need were used as demographic variables in this study. Family socioeconomic status was measured by a one-item question (1 = yes; 0 = no) indicating whether their families currently received public financial assistance (e.g., AFDC).

Results

Descriptives

Means, standard deviations, and bivariate correlations of study variables are shown in Table 1. Though there was variability among females in this investigation (Actual Range: 0–3), average daily hassles were relatively low (M= 1.02; SD=.83). However, means for depressive and (M= 2.06; SD=.72, Range: 1–4) anxiety symptoms (M=2.18; SD=.61, Range: 1–4) were moderate, with participant responses averaging near the mid-point of the scale. Follow-up t-tests indicated that adolescent females reported significantly more anxiety symptoms in comparison to depressive symptoms (p<.001). The means for both masculine (M=2.88; SD=.59) and feminine role orientation (M=3.06; SD=.48) were slightly higher than the midpoint of the response scale (Range: 1–4). Follow-up t-tests indicated that girls in this sample were significantly higher on masculinity scores in comparison to femininity scores (p<.001). In alignment with existing investigations with African American adolescent females (e.g., Buckley and Carter 2005), androgynous role orientation was relatively high among girls in this sample, with a mean of 5.94 out of 8.00 (SD=.90).

Table 1 Correlations, means, and standard deviations among study variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Age	1.00							
2. Family SES	.07	1.00						
3. Daily Hassles	−.04	−.08	1.00					
4. Masc. Role Orientation	.10	.03	−.22[b]	1.00				
5. Fem. Role Orientation	−.01	.06	−.08	.43[d]	1.00			
6. Androgynous Role Orientation	.06	.05	−.20[b]	.88[d]	.81[d]	1.00		
7. Depressive Symptoms	.02	.08	.73[d]	−.25[c]	−.24[c]	−.29[c]	1.00	
8. Anxiety Symptoms	.01	.08	.69[d]	−.33[d]	−.27[c]	−.36[d]	.84[d]	1.00
Mean (SD)	15.50(1.70)	.30(.48)	1.02(.83)	2.88(.59)	3.06(.48)	5.94(.90)	2.05(.73)	2.18(.62)
Range	11–17	0–1.00	0–3.00	1.00–4.00	1.00–4.00	2.60–8.00	1.00–4.00	1.00–4.00
Actual Range	11–17	0–1.00	0–3.00	1.60–4.00	1.00–4.00	3.00–8.00	1.00–3.65	1.06–3.39

[a] p<.10; [b] p<.05; [c] p<.01;[d] p<.001

Preliminary Analyses

Age and family socioeconomic status were unrelated to other study variables (see Table 1). Although daily hassles were unrelated to feminine role orientation (r=−.08, *ns*), a greater masculine (r=−.22, p<.05) and androgynous role orientation (r=−.20, p<.05) were associated with fewer reported daily hassles. Adolescent females with a greater feminine role orientation reported less depressive (r=−.24, p<.05) and anxiety symptoms (r=−.27, p<.01). Similarly, masculine role orientation was negatively related with depressive (r=−.25, p<.01) and anxiety symptoms (r=−.33; p<.001). Also, androgyny was associated with fewer depressive (r=−.29, p<.01) and anxiety symptoms (r=−.36, p<.001). Additionally, there was a positive association between masculine and feminine role orientation (r=.43, p<.001). As demonstrated in previous investigations (e.g., Lamers et al. 2011), increased depressive symptoms were associated with higher reported anxiety symptoms (r=.84, p<.001). Correlations among all study variables are shown in Table 1.

Hypothesis Testing

A series of multiple regressions were conducted to test hypotheses 1–3. Age and family socioeconomic status were included as control variables in all regression models. Before conducting analyses, formal tests of multicollinearity were calculated among the dimensions of gender role orientation. Tolerance scores ranging from 2.20 to 2.45 and moderate to high correlations between the dimensions (r≥.40) indicated potential issues with multicollinearity among this moderately-sized sample. As such, separate multiple regression models were computed including control variables, adolescent daily hassles, one gender role orientation dimension and its associated 2-way interaction. All continuous variables were centered and used to compute interaction terms (e.g., feminine role orientation x daily hassles; masculine role orientation x daily hassles; androgynous role orientation x daily hassles). Significant moderating relationships were explored using Aiken and West's (1991) guidelines for interpreting interactions (e.g., one standard deviation above and below mean) and plotted using Sibley's (2008) utility for examining interactions in multiple regressions.

In line with our first hypothesis, increased daily hassles were associated with increased depressive (β's ranging from .70 to .74 across models; p<.001) and anxiety symptoms (β's ranging from .68 to .69 across models, p<.001). Additionally, our findings provided partial support for hypothesis 2, which posited that both masculine and androgynous would be associated with greater psychological functioning (e.g., fewer depressive and anxiety symptoms). Although masculine (β=−.02, *ns*), and androgynous role orientation (β=−.11, *ns*) were unrelated to adolescent females' depressive symptoms, a greater androgynous role orientation (β=−.14, p<.05) was associated with fewer reported anxiety symptoms. However, there was some evidence that a greater feminine role orientation was associated with greater psychological functioning among girls in our sample. Specifically, though not associated with depressive symptoms (β=−.11, *ns*), females with a greater feminine role orientation reported fewer anxiety symptoms (β=−.13, p=.06) (Table 2).

Hypothesis 3 was that gender role orientation would moderate the association between daily hassles and psychological functioning. Overall, our findings provide partial support for our assertions. Specifically, analyses revealed two significant two-way interactions between masculine role orientation and adolescent daily hassles predicting adolescent females' depressive (β=.13, p<.05) and anxiety symptoms (β=.15, p<.05). Although more reported daily hassles were associated with increased depressive symptoms for all females, the association was much more pronounced for females reporting a greater masculine role orientation (See Fig. 1). As shown in Fig. 2, a similar pattern emerged with respect to depressive symptomatology. Specifically, for females reporting a greater masculine role orientation, the association between daily hassles and depressive symptoms was more marked. All models predicting depressive (masculine: F(5, 97)=25.11, p<.001; feminine: F(5, 97)=24.73, p<.001; androgynous: F(5, 97)=24.84, p<.001)and anxiety symptoms (masculine: F(5, 96)=19.16, p<.001; feminine: F(5, 96)=18.26, p<.001; androgynous: F(5, 96)=19.24, p<.001) were significant.

Discussion

Despite indications that daily hassles are particularly relevant for understanding psychological functioning (Grzywacz et al. 2004), few studies have examined this association among African American adolescent females. A goal of our investigation was to examine the association between daily hassles and African American adolescent girls' psychological functioning. Consistent with our initial hypothesis, this investigation indicated that increased daily hassles were associated with greater depressive and anxiety symptoms. Our findings are pertinent given suggestion that racial/ethnic minorities and females report greater stressors (Choi et al. 2006; Hankin et al. 2007). Studies specific to African American adult (McCallum et al. 2002) and adolescent females (Guthrie et al. 2001) also have demonstrated linkages between increased stress and reduced psychological functioning. The relationship between daily hassles and psychological functioning among this popula-

Table 2 Adolescent daily hassles and gender role orientation predicting adolescent females psychological functioning

	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3		
	B	SE	β	B	SE	β	B	SE	β
				Depressive Symptoms					
Age	.00	.03	.00	−.01	.03	−.02	.00	.03	.00
Family Socioeconomic Status	.25	.10	.18[b]	.26	.10	.18[c]	.26	.10	.18[b]
Adolescent Daily Hassles	.64	.06	.74[d]	.65	.06	.74[d]	.61	.06	.70[d]
Feminine Role Orientation	−.20	.12	−.11						
Masculine Role Orientation				−.03	.09	−.02			
Androgynous Role Orientation							−.08	.06	−.11
Feminine ID × Hassles	−.06	.14	−.04						
Masculine ID × Hassles				.22	.10	.13[b]			
Androgynous ID × Hassles							.02	.03	.02
R^2	.48			.55			.55		
F-statistic	24.73[d]			25.11[d]			24.84[d]		
				Anxiety Symptoms					
Age	.00	.03	.01	.00	.03	.01	.01	.03	.03
Family Socioeconomic Status	.19	.09	.15[b]	.19	.09	.15[b]	.17	.09	.14[a]
Adolescent Daily Hassles	.50	.06	.68[d]	.51	.06	.69[d]	.51	.06	.69[d]
Feminine Role Orientation	−.18	.09	−.13[a]						
Masculine Role Orientation				−.11	.08	−.11			
Androgynous Role Orientation							−.11	.05	−.14[b]
Feminine ID × Hassles	−.09	.13	−.05						
Masculine ID × Hassles				.19	.09	.15[b]			
Androgynous ID × Hassles							.01	.02	.01
R^2	.47			.48			.49		
F-statistic	18.26[d]			19.16[d]			19.24[d]		

Depressive Symptoms df = (5, 97); Anxiety Symptoms df = (5, 96)

[a] $p<.10$; [b] $p<.05$; [c] $p<.01$; [d] $p<.001$

tion is of even greater importance given indications that African American females, in comparison to their European American counterparts, are disproportionately affected by stress-related disorders (e.g., hypertension) (cf. Townsend et al. 2007). Still, studies have not explored fully, the ways in which daily hassles are related to African American

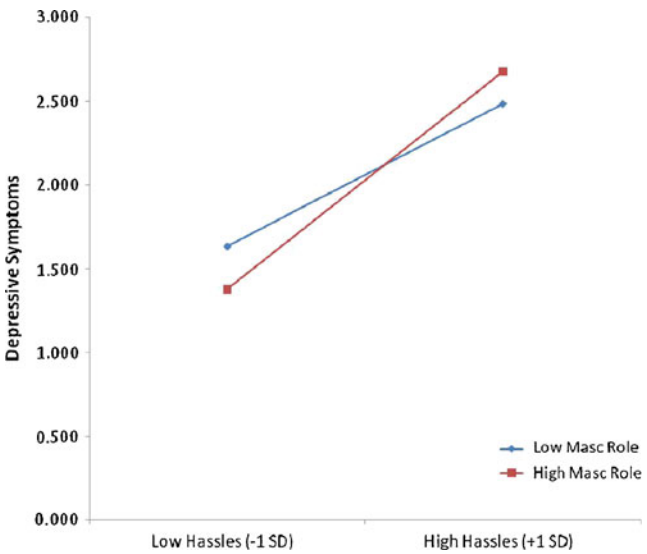

Fig. 1 Two-way interaction of masculine role orientation and daily hassles predicting adolescent females' depressive symptoms ($N=103$)

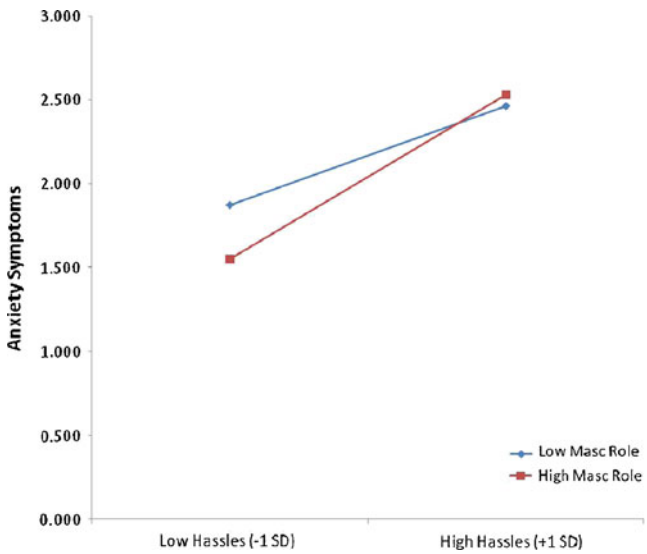

Fig. 2 Two-way interaction of masculine role orientation and daily hassles predicting adolescent females' anxiety symptoms ($N=103$)

adolescent girls' psychological outcomes. Thus, our investigation provides support for this association.

Also, in line with prior studies (e.g., Palapattu et al. 2006), we posited that a greater androgynous and masculine orientation would be associated with greater psychological functioning among this sample of African American adolescent girls. We found partial support for our hypothesis, such that greater androgyny was associated with fewer anxiety symptoms. Our results are in line somewhat with recent investigations of African American adolescent girls (Buckley and Carter 2005), which found that higher androgyny scores were associated with several domains of self-esteem, including increased satisfaction and reduced anxiety. Also, based upon the work of Bem (1983, 1984), an androgynous orientation should lead to greater psychological functioning. These findings are pertinent given larger discussions about gender-related roles and associated behaviors in African American communities (e.g., Cole and Zucker 2007; Konrad and Harris 2002). In particular, research has suggested that gender roles are more flexible within African American communities. Further, these investigations are supported by investigations indicating that African American females, in comparison to White females, are more androgynous (e.g. higher levels of masculine and feminine traits) (Harris 1996). Taking this into consideration, androgynous characteristics may be more reflective of how gender is socially constructed among African American populations. Thus, perspectives that frame gender role orientation as fluid, interactional, and socio-historically embedded might give additional insight into how gender is enacted as well how potential contributions to African American adolescent females' psychological functioning.

Another notable study finding was that higher femininity scores were associated with greater psychological functioning (e.g., fewer anxiety symptoms). Similar to the larger literature, research specific to African American adolescents has not revealed a consistent pattern (Palapattu et al. 2006; Buckley and Carter 2005; Lyons et al. 2006). However, our results are in line with existing studies that have found positive associations between feminine role orientation and psychological outcomes among African American adolescent girls (Buckley and Carter 2005; Townsend 2007). Although this relationship was not as robust compared to an androgynous orientation, it does suggest that feminine-typed personality traits, such as communion and emotional expressivity, may encourage optimal mental health outcomes (e.g., Saunders and Kashubeck-West 2006; Helgeson 1994; Heppner et al. 1995). Also, it is important to point out that, for girls in our sample, masculinity and femininity were positively correlated. Thus, our findings may point to potential variation in the conceptualization of femininity and masculinity among African American girls. Additional studies, however, are needed to explore further the nature of this relationship.

In line with the stress-buffering hypothesis (Cohen and Mckay 1984; Cohen & Wills 1985), this investigation examined whether gender role orientation moderated the association between daily hassles and African American adolescent females' psychological functioning. Although we found no moderating effect for an androgynous or feminine role orientation, we did find a significant moderating effect for masculine role orientation. In fact, despite predictions that masculine gender-typed characteristics would mitigate the negative association between adolescent daily hassles and psychological functioning, we found the contrary. Our findings indicated that, for girls with a greater masculine role orientation, increased daily hassles were associated reduced psychological functioning (increased anxiety and depressive symptoms). Although previous studies have suggested that masculinity may serve an important protective role (e.g., Roos and Cohen 1987; Lam and McBride-Chang 2007), our results indicated that a greater masculine role orientation may intensify the negative association between daily hassles and African American girls' mental health.

Few studies exploring the moderating role of gender role orientation exist. However, our findings parallel that of previous work with adolescent populations. Towbes et al. (1989) found that a greater masculine role orientation exacerbated the impact of daily hassles on psychological functioning among junior high school girls. Previous research suggests that masculine-typed traits, such as more active and problem-coping strategies, are associated with more optimal psychological outcomes. Other masculine-typed traits, such as emotional restriction may lead to reduced psychological functioning (e.g., Snell et al. 1986). Recent research with African American men, suggest that restrictive emotionality may exacerbate the association between race-related stressors and mental health, lends additional support for our study findings (Hammond et al. 2006).

This may be particularly relevant as studies have suggested that African American females report more masculine-typed characteristics than their European American counterparts (e.g., Molloy and Herzberger 1998). It is possible that coping behaviors may provide additional insight into our results. Studies have shown that African American adult females are more likely to use avoidance in comparison to problem solving or support-seeking coping behaviors (Utsey et al. 2000; cf. Thomas et al. 2008), which may have negative implications for psychological functioning in the face of daily hassles. In support of this argument, studies have suggested that the adaptive nature of a specific gender role orientation (e.g., femininity; masculinity; androgyny) can differ across situation or context (Stake 1997). Thus, in the presence of increased daily hassles, a greater masculine orientation could have negative implications for African American adolescent girls' psychological

functioning. Still, additional studies are needed to better understand the underlying processes and mechanisms guiding these associations among African American adolescent females.

Study Limitations and Directions for Future Research

Despite the contributions of this study, it is not without limitations. First, there was potential for response bias with some of the measures used (e.g., CES-D; CSRI). Additionally, this investigation used a cross-sectional, single informant design and we were not able to parcel out the directionality of our findings. Prospective studies should explore how daily hassles contribute to long-term psychological functioning among African American females as well as the potential buffering role of gender role orientation. Also, given the possibility that these findings may not transfer to a diverse range of African American adolescent females, future studies should explore these associations among females residing in various contexts and consider whether demographic characteristics (e.g., age; socioeconomic status) may further moderate these relationships. As prior studies have suggested that the nexus of race and gender is important for understanding the totality of African American females' experiences and subsequent functioning (Buchanan and Fitzgerald 2008; Corneille et al. 2005; Settles 2006; Stevens 1997; Woods-Giscombe and Lobel 2008), future investigations should explore both racial and gender-related stressors as well as how they are associated with females' psychological functioning during the adolescent years. In particular, person-centered methodological approaches could be useful in the identification of gender role orientation profiles and examine how these profiles might be related differentially to psychological functioning.

Conclusions and Implications

Our study is contributory to the existing literature as it highlights the manner in which daily hassles are associated with African American adolescent females' psychological functioning. Moreover, this investigation provides some evidence that gender role orientation has a direct and moderating relationship with African American girls' psychological-related outcomes. In conjunction with recent studies (Belgrave et al. 2000; Corneille et al. 2005; Nguyen et al. 2010; Townsend 2002), these findings have implications for research and practice with African American adolescent girls. Specifically, this study suggests that additional attention to daily hassles may lend insight into psychological functioning among this population. Additionally, as a majority of studies have explored the protective and promotive role of ethnic orientation (e.g., Corneille and Belgrave 2007; Turnage 2004), this investigation suggests that gender role orientation also contributes to our understanding of African American girls' psychological functioning. Moreover, this study provides support for psychological intervention and prevention programming targeting African American adolescent girls. In particular, programming that gives attention to both culturally- and gender-specific factors, including the nexus of these factors have the potential to contribute to African American girls' psychological outcomes.

Acknowledgement Our appreciation is expressed to the research staff and all the girls who participated in this study. The authors thank the National Institute on Drug Abuse (Grant K20-DA000233-01A1) for their support. We also gratefully acknowledge anonymous reviewers for comments on this manuscript.

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