The Effects of Perceived Discrimination and Acculturative Stress on Ethnic Minority Young Adult Self-Esteem and Anxiety

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Introduction

- Minority college students are at increased risk for negative mental health outcomes and low self-esteem issues considering acculturative stress and perceived discrimination (Gomez et al., 2011).
- How discrimination is viewed by the individual and how they adjust to dominant culture plays an important role in self-esteem (Hall et al., 2015).
- Studies following the relationship between perceived discrimination and acculturative stress rarely look into mental health outcomes along with self-esteem (Paukert et al., 20 06; Wei et al., 2013).
- This research may provide insight into the mechanisms which affect psychological distress (Tonsing et al., 2016).

Hypotheses

**Hypothesis 1**: Minority students with higher levels of perceived discrimination will be more likely to experience anxious symptoms and lower self-esteem than minority students with lower levels of perceived discrimination (PD).

**Hypothesis 2**: Minority students with higher acculturative stress levels will be more likely to experience anxious symptoms and lower self-esteem than minority students with lower levels of acculturative stress (AS).

**Hypothesis 3**: Overall Black and Hispanic/Latinx students will report higher levels of perceived discrimination and acculturative stress than Asian students.

Methodology

**Measures**

**Perceived Ethnic Discrimination Scale**
The Perceived Ethnic Discrimination Questionnaire-Community Version (Bronodolo et al., 2005). The PEDQ-CV was utilized to capture the levels of perceived discrimination experienced by a participant throughout their lifetime on a 5-point Likert scale.

**Self-Esteem Scale**
The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965). The RSES was used to assess self-esteem of the participant on a 4-point scale.

**Anxiety Measure**
The Beck Anxiety Inventory (Beck, 1965). The BAI was used to assess anxiety levels for each participant, based on symptomatology in the past week on a 4-point scale.

**Acculturative Stress Measure**
The Social, Attitudinal, Familial, and Environmental Acculturative Stress Scale-Short Version (Mena et al., 1987). The SAFE scale was used to assess acculturative stress levels in each participant on a 5-point Likert scale.

Results

**Perceived Discrimination and Mental Health**

Positive Correlation between perceived discrimination and self-esteem ($r(60) = .264, p < .05$)

Outcomes across Racial Groups

Positive Correlation between perceived discrimination and mental health ($r(57) = .426, p < .05$)

No significant difference found in acculturative stress levels ($t(45) = 2.246, p > .05$)

**Future Directions**

- There should be more research done to view the long-term effects of these negative mental health issues related to PD & AS.
- Future research should compare across groups besides Asian, Black, and Hispanic groups.
- More research should go into looking at multiple ethnic groups within one racial group. No racial group is a monolith and looking into difference within the group can also be helpful to finding solutions to prevalent issues.