

Predictors of Loneliness and Psychological Distress among College Students who have Experienced Discrimination

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Introduction

- There is strong evidence that racial discrimination is associated with lower perceptions of social support and poorer psychological health¹⁻⁴

Aim

- Using The National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities (NIMHD) Research Framework⁵, three levels of influence were evaluated in identifying the association of social support, discrimination type (major and everyday discrimination), and on-campus cultural familiarity and cultural validity on feelings of loneliness and psychological distress among college students who report having experienced discrimination

Methods

- Secondary analysis from larger cross-sectional study⁶ among racially and ethnically diverse undergraduate college students (n=348).

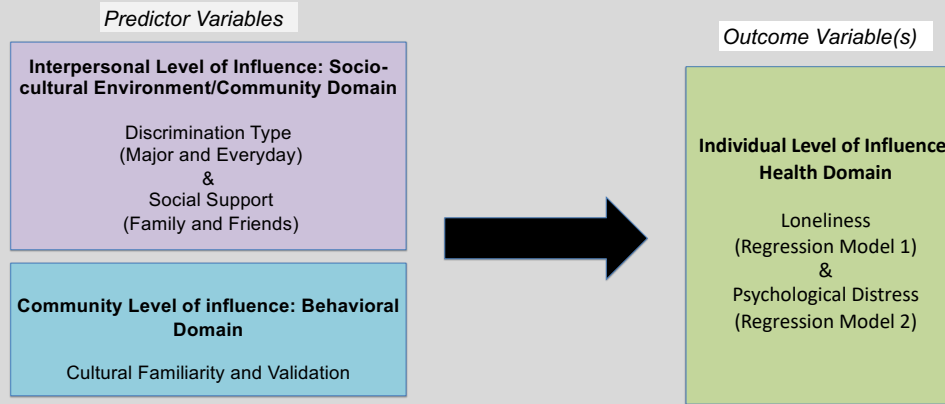
Measures

- The Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K6)⁷
- The UCLA Loneliness Scale⁸
- Sociodemographic Characteristics
- The Experiences of Discrimination Scale⁹
- The Major Experiences of Discrimination scale
- The Everyday Discrimination Scale¹⁰
- The Lubben Social Network Scale (LSNS)^{11,12}
- The Culturally Engaging Campus Environments (CECE) scale¹³

Data Analysis

- Two multiple regression analyses were conducted. From discrimination, cultural familiarity, cultural validity, and social support. One regression predicted loneliness and the second predicted psychological distress

Figure 1. Classification of Regression Models by Domain and Level of Influence in Accordance with the NIMHD Framework⁵



Results

Table 1. Loneliness Regression Results

Variables	B	Std. Error	Beta	t value	p value
Constant	8.837	.521	----	16.969	<.001**
Discrimination Major	-.045	.078	-.034	-.576	.565
Everyday Discrimination	.021	.015	.08	1.369	.164
Cultural Familiarity	-.07	.027	-.181	-2.6	.01*
Cultural Validity	-.054	.043	-.086	-1.262	.208
Social Support Family	-.041	.026	-.087	-1.589	.113
Social Support Friends	-.096	.027	-.191	-3.492	<.001**

Note: R2= 0.159, Adj. R2= 0.144.

*Denote Significant Effect (.05< p >.001)

**Denotes High Significant Effect (p<.<.001)

Table 2. Psychological Distress Regression Results

Variables	B	Std. Error	Beta	t value	p value
Constant	13.544	1.323	----	10.238	<.001**
Discrimination Major	.074	.199	.023	.371	.711
Everyday Discrimination	.074	.038	.115	1.964	.05*
Cultural Familiarity	-.198	.069	-.206	-2.889	.004**
Cultural Validity	.140	.109	-.090	1.288	.199
Social Support Family	-.296	.067	-.248	-4.428	<.001**
Social Support Friends	.056	.07	.045	.806	.421

Note: R2= 0.128, Adj. R2= 0.112.

*Denote Significant Effect (.05< p >.001)

**Denotes High Significant Effect (p<.<.001)

Discussion

- Psychological distress was positively associated with everyday discrimination
- Experiences of major discrimination was not significant in either regression model.
- Both psychological distress and loneliness were found to be negatively associated with cultural familiarity.
- Loneliness was also negatively associated with support from friends, whereas psychological distress was negatively associated with support from family
- Positive mental health outcomes were found to be associated with cultural familiarity and social support within students who have experienced discrimination

Future Work

- Results indicate that systematic racism and discrimination impact the psychological well-being of undergraduate college students
- Findings demonstrate the need to combat microaggressions and that university-based efforts are critical
- At the institutional level, addressing microaggressions and promoting cultural familiarity are critical to promote mental health and well-being of students on college campuses who face discrimination
- Future studies should investigate how discrimination impacts other facets of students' psychological wellbeing and explore how students may be coping

Literature Cited



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