

Examining Hope as a moderator between Racial Microaggressions, and Anxiety in Black Students attending Predominantly White Institutions

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Introduction

- Rates of anxiety within the United States continue to hit high levels, demonstrating significant increases among adults (NIMH, 2017).
- 1 in 5 adults in the U.S. report living with an anxiety disorder (e.g. social anxiety disorder, generalized anxiety disorder), resulting in 50 million individuals (NIMH, 2017).
- These rising rates are accompanied by shifting demographic trends, especially with individuals identifying with a racial or ethnic minority group.
- Reported an increase in anxiety levels among Black adults from “5.24% to 5.88%” (Goodwin et al., 2020).
- Black communities have to deal with multiple unique stressors that are not common for other racial and ethnic populations, such as racial-based traumas and microaggressions (Adams 2021; Hope et al., 2020; Rogers et al., 2017).
- Black Americans are at higher risk for developing co-morbid health difficulties, as research finds a lack of treatment for anxiety correlates to lowered productivity, suicidal risk, and reduced quality of life. (Clark et al., 1999, Sue et al., 2007).
- Hope can be defined as a protective factor, seen to mitigate the effects of racial microaggressions and anxiety (Synder et al., 1991).
- Hope has had empirical evidence to buffer mental health difficulties, such as anxiety and depression (Kharah et al., 2019).
- This study will examine the relationship between racial microaggressions and anxiety and; Furthermore, how thoughts of hope can act as a "buffer" for the negative psychological effects of mental distress of Black students attending Predominantly White Institutions (PWIs).

Methods

This proposed cross-sectional and correlational study will measure the constructs of racial microaggressions, hope, and anxiety levels through a quantitative, survey-based, cross-sectional study:

- The variables and measures are displayed in Table 1: Anxiety, Racial Microaggressions, and Hope.
- The proposed study’s target population is Black emerging adults (18-25) students currently attending PWIs throughout the state of Florida.
- Convenience sampling will be utilized for data collection and participant recruitment.
 - Targeted recruitment was utilized to achieve access to the participant sample of interest through recruitment flyers at FSU and individual/group recruitment (recruitment tabling at FSU, mass emails to Black student groups at PWIs in Florida, etc.).
- This proposed study utilized a Qualtrics-based survey, including four measures: a demographic questionnaire to determine research inclusion and exclusion and describe the sample, an anxiety levels measure, a racial microaggressions measure, and a hope measure.
 - Participants were excluded if they did not endorse being a current undergraduate student, were below the age of 18, or did not identify as Black.
- Note that the data was cleaned (fixing or removing incorrect, corrupted, incorrectly formatted, duplicate, or incomplete data within a dataset) before the creation of any dummy variables or analyses run.
- The primary analytical technique employed to answer the research questions will be multi variate correlation analysis.
 - Research Question 1: Are frequency of racial microaggressions associated with anxiety levels in Black college emerging adult students at PWIs?
 - Research Question 2: Will hope change (moderate) the relationship between racial microaggressions and levels of anxiety?

Sample (N=59):

- $M^{age} = 19.75$ years. $SD^{age} = 1.27$ years
- First Generation College Student: 28
- Race: 33 African American, 17 Caribbean, 4 Afro-Latin, 4 African, 1 Other/Multi
- Gender: 39 Female, 20 Male

Results

Table 1.

Measures

Measure	Items	Responses	Sample Item
Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Scales (DASS-21; Lovibond & Lovibond, 1995)	7	0 (Did not apply to me at all) to 3 (Applied to me very much, or most of the time)	"I experienced breathing difficulties"
School-Based Racial and Ethnic Microaggressions Scale (SB-REMA; Keels et al., 2017)	14	1 (Never) to 4 (Often/Frequently)	"Others assumed I was good at certain things because of my race/ethnicity"
Adult Hope Scale (AHS; Snyder., 1991)	12	1 (Definitely False) to 8 (Definitely True)	"There are lots of ways around any problem"

Table 2.

Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Standard Deviation	N
Anxiety	8.6071	6.53572	56
Micro Aggressions	15.8136	8.13777	59
Hope	70.1228	6.74810	57

Table 3.

Simple Multivariate correlation comparisons on study variables

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

		Anxiety	Micro Aggressions	Hope
Anxiety	Pearson Correlation	1	.583**	.121
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001	.379
	N	56	56	55
Micro Aggressions	Pearson Correlation	.583**	1	.073
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001		.590
	N	56	59	57
Hope	Pearson Correlation	.121	.073	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.379	.590	
	N	55	57	57

Discussion

Data Analysis & Psychological Measurement Score interpretation considerations:

- A significant positive association was found between anxiety and racial microaggressions in our analysis, with the level of perceived racial microaggressions in school-based environments rising as self-appraised anxiety levels rose.
- Hope did not show any significant association with either variable.
- This poster is based on preliminary data (59 total participants); thus, the generalizability of the results should be taken with caution.
- The research study ultimately aims to collect 112 participants, as indicated as significant via a G-Power 3 statistical power analysis.
- This analysis corroborates extant findings in the current literature which postulates a significant positive relationship between anxiety and racial microaggressions.

DASS-42 (Anxiety):

- The mean respondent score of 8.6 for the anxiety DASS subscale denotes a “Mild level of Anxiety” as an average in our sample.

SB-REMS (Racial Microaggressions):

- Did not control for the three subscale dimensions of the measure: “Stereotyping”, “Invalidation”, and “Invalidation of Racial/Cultural Issues” which may influence the association between the variables and offer the opportunity to further glean the relationship between the variables.

AHS (Hope):

- Did not control for the two subscales of Agency & Pathways (Agency is an individual’s ability to begin and sustain action toward goal achievement. Pathways is a person’s ability to identify and plan routes to attain a goal.).
- Although Hope did not have a significant association with the other two variables, it is worth considering that this variable is ultimately to be used as a moderator for the full study and there is limited and nascent empirical evidence exploring the relationship between Hope and our variables of anxiety and racial microaggressions.

Future Research Considerations:

- The research team is continuing to collect remaining participants
- Utilizing a different statistical analysis (Process Macro for Moderation analysis with hope as a potential moderator between anxiety & Racial microaggressions)
- Adding the following control variables/covariates to the analysis: Ethnicity, First-Gen Status, and Gender Identity.

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References

