



Abstract

Co-rumination, the repetitive discussion of problems within relationships, has been extensively studied in general contexts; however, few studies have examined its role as a coping strategy in response to specific stressors such as discrimination. Existing literature focuses largely on white adolescent friendship dyads, leaving co-rumination within diverse sociocultural contexts widely unexplored. Moreover, questions remain regarding how co-rumination partners (“confidants”) are selected and how confidant characteristics impact co-rumination outcomes. This study expands this area of work by testing two research questions: RQ1) Do individuals co-ruminate more with confidants they perceive to be more (vs. less) similar to themselves in identity, and RQ2) To what extent does co-rumination about discrimination predict coping strategies and is the strength of this relationship dependent upon shared identity with confidants. To this end, we recruited a sample of US adults using ResearchMatch ($N = 1339$) to report experiences of discrimination, coping strategies, and three confidants with whom they discussed experienced discrimination. Participants also reported co-rumination and extent of shared identity with each confidant. To test RQ1 we will use multilevel modeling to account for the dependency of confidants nested within participants to examine the effect of shared identity on co-rumination behavior. For RQ2, we will use hierarchical multiple regressions to investigate how co-rumination with primary confidants predicts strategies used to cope with discrimination and whether these relationships vary based on the shared identity of the confidants.

Introduction

Background

- Co-rumination is an interpersonal emotion regulation strategy characterized by cyclical and repetitive discussion that fosters social support but exacerbates symptoms of anxiety and depression.
- Confidants play a critical role, as they act as trusted individuals with whom people process and share emotions. Research remains unclear about the extent to which identity of the confidant influences this process.
- In the context of discrimination, co-rumination may serve as a coping strategy to process social injustices, particularly those related to their self-identity.
- Shared identity may foster commonality within the relationship. Discussion of identity-related stressors with someone who has shared a similar experience may find co-rumination easier or more validating, while others may be more cautious in discussions about these issues when they lack commonality.

Research Questions

1. Do individuals co-ruminate more with confidants they perceive to share their identity and is this effect moderated by gender?
2. To what extent does co-rumination about identity-related stressors predict coping strategies, and how do these relationships vary based on shared identity with the confidant and gender?

Method

Procedure

1339 US adults were recruited using ResearchMatch. Participants who expressed interest were sent a survey link. After informed consent, participants completed a series of questionnaires and provided demographics. Only participants who reported experiencing discrimination due to their identity were included in the sample.

Self-Reported Identity

Use whatever labels are most important to you to describe your identity. The identity you write will be used in future survey questions so it should make sense in a sentence starting with “I am a(n)...”

Confidant Selection

“When you have negative experiences related to your identity as a(n)___[piped text]___, who do you talk to the most about it? Name the three people you talk to the most, starting with the person you confide in the most.”

Coping with Discrimination (Wei et al., 2010)

Please respond to the following items as honestly as possible to reflect how much each strategy best describes the way you cope with discrimination due to your identity as a(n)___[piped text]___

Subscales

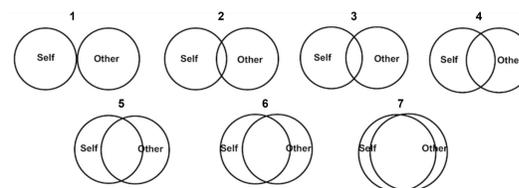
- **Education/Advocacy** “I try to educate people so that they are aware of discrimination.”
- **Internalization** “I wonder if I did something to offend others.”
- **Drug & Alcohol Use** “I try to stop thinking about it by taking alcohol or drugs.”
- **Resistance** “I get into an argument with the person.”
- **Detachment** “I’ve stopped trying to do anything.”

Co-Rumination Questionnaire (per confidant)(Adapted from Rose, 2002)

In general, when I talk to ___[Name]___ about negative experiences I’ve had related to my identity as a(n) ___[piped text]___...
“We end up spending a lot of time talking about the situation”

Perceived Partner Similarity

You described your identity as a(n)___[piped text]___. Which picture best described how similar ___[Name]___ is to you in terms of identity?



Results

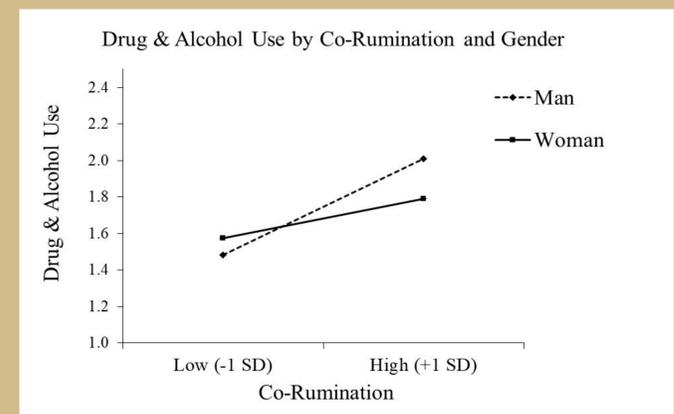
RQ1: Do individuals co-ruminate more with confidants they perceive to share their identity?

Yes! Greater perceived similarity was associated with greater co-rumination ($B = 0.07, t = 7.87, p < .001$) Gender did not moderate this effect.

RQ2: To what extent does co-rumination about identity-related stressors predict coping strategies, and how do these relationships vary based on shared identity with the confidant and gender?

Coping Strategy	Result
Education/Advocacy	Positive association between co-rumination and education/advocacy ($B = 0.34, t = 8.25, p < .001$)
Internalization	Positive association between co-rumination and internalizing ($B = 0.21, t = 5.12, p < .001$)
Drug and Alcohol Use	Interaction between co-rumination and gender on drug and alcohol use ($B = -0.90, t = -2.14, p < .001$)
Resistance	Positive association between co-rumination and resistance ($B = 0.17, t = 5.27, p < .001$)
Detachment	No association ($B = -0.40, t = -1.15, p = .251$)

None of these effects were moderated by shared identity



- For both men and women, greater co-rumination was associated with greater coping via drug & alcohol use (p 's $< .001$).
- The difference between men and women in terms of drug & alcohol use was significant at high levels of co-rumination ($B = -0.11, t = -1.98, p = .048$), but not low levels ($B = 0.05, t = 0.91, p = .363$).

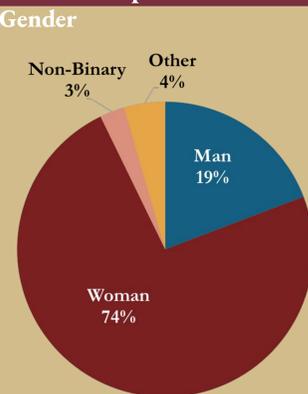
Participant Demographics

$M_{age} = 51.92$ years; $SD_{age} = 17.92$ years

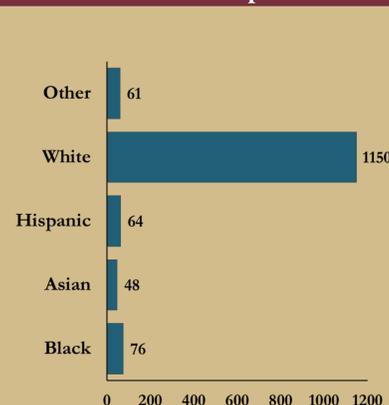
Confidant Demographics

$M_{age} = 50.90$ years; $SD_{age} = 18.14$ years

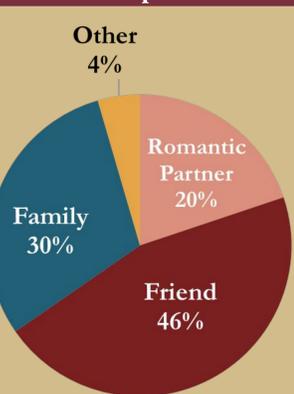
Participant Gender



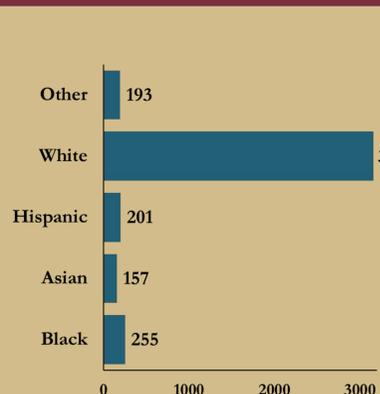
Participant Race



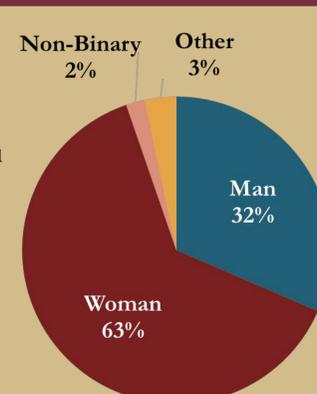
Relationship with Confidant



Confidant Race



Confidant



Discussion

- Co-rumination fosters both adaptive and maladaptive coping strategies.
- Gender differences emerged, with men being more vulnerable to maladaptive coping when engaging in co-rumination.
- Perceived identity similarity drives who individuals choose to co-ruminate with, but does not alter the coping strategies used.
- Findings suggest that while individuals prefer co-ruminating with those who share their identity, the psychological effects of co-rumination remain consistent.

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