Diversity Related Experiences among College Students and Ethnic Differences in the Awareness of Racism

Alexandra Reveles, B.A.
Amanda Blume, B.A.
Renee Galliher, PhD
Department of Psychology, Utah State University

INTRODUCTION

• This study examined differences between Students of Color and White students in diversity related experiences, as well as the relationship between engagement in diversity related experiences and awareness of racism on campus.

Previous Research

• It is estimated that nearly 1 million college students are victims of racially motivated harassment. Racism is more likely to be reported at predominantly White institutions (van Dyke & Tester, 2014).

• Recent research has examined the impact of factors, such as color-blind racial attitudes, intercultural contact, and engagement in diversity related experiences on the awareness of racial issues, discrimination, and harassment of college students.

• Color-blind racial attitudes were found to decrease as a function of both formal and informal diversity experiences (Neville, Potratz, Lewis, & Spanierman, 2014).

• White college students who had more awareness of institutional discrimination and racial issues had more positive attitudes toward Asian/Asian Americans (Dinh, Weinstein, Nenon, and Rondeau, 2008).

• Ethnic minority freshmen students had more of a predisposition to engage with diverse peers than did their White peers (Hall, Cabrera, and Milam, 2011).

Hypotheses

• Students of Color display more engagement in diversity related activities than White students.

• Students of Color show more awareness of racism on-campus than White Students.

• Participation in diversity related activities is related to greater awareness of racism, which would be true for White students than for Students of Color.

METHOD

Participants

• 633 undergraduate students were recruited from a predominantly White university in the Western United States
  - 227 Students of Color
  - 406 White students

• Mean age: 21.6 years, range 18 – 25

• Procedures

  - Participants were recruited through email to complete the DLE survey and entered into a drawing for one of ten iPad minis after completion.

• Measures

  - The Diverse Learning Environments Survey (DLE) was used to measure student perceptions about campus climate, experiences with faculty, staff, and peers, as well as academic outcomes for students (DLE, 2015).

RESULTS

• Independent samples t-tests showed significant differences in positive cross-racial interactions, co-curricular diversity experiences, microaggressions, and campus racial climate.

• Students of Color were more likely to participate in diversity related activities and had more awareness of racial issues.

• All variables range from 1 – 5, except Harassment (1 – 4).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>White Students</th>
<th>Students of Color</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive Cross-Racial Interactions</td>
<td>3.20 (0.30)</td>
<td>3.11 (0.52)</td>
<td>-0.3</td>
<td>631</td>
<td>.740</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum Inclusion</td>
<td>2.00 (0.75)</td>
<td>1.96 (0.72)</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>631</td>
<td>.740</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-Curricular Diversity Activities</td>
<td>1.60 (0.75)</td>
<td>1.93 (1.00)</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>631</td>
<td>.020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harassment</td>
<td>1.11 (0.34)</td>
<td>1.20 (0.44)</td>
<td>-0.1</td>
<td>631</td>
<td>.910</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Microaggressions</td>
<td>5.15 (0.30)</td>
<td>3.07 (0.70)</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>631</td>
<td>.200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus Racial Climate</td>
<td>3.08 (0.36)</td>
<td>2.99 (0.55)</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>631</td>
<td>.810</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

• Bivariate correlations examined the relationships between diversity experiences and awareness of racism for both White students and Students of Color.

DISCUSSION

• Students of Color were more likely than White students to participate in diversity related experiences and had more awareness of racial issues than White students.

• Students of Color and White students who reported positive cross-racial interactions engaged more in co-curricular diversity activities.

• Students of Color and White students who engaged in co-curricular diversity activities were more aware of racist situations, such as racial harassment and microaggressions.

• Formal and informal diversity experiences were more strongly associated with reports of microaggressions for Students of Color than for White students.

• Moderation hypotheses regarding ethnicity were unsupported.

• Students of Color were oversampled, resulting in a study sample that may not be representative of the university’s population.

• Measures of ethnic identity and psychosocial health would be relevant for understanding discrimination experiences.

• The implementation of inclusive curriculum for college students to increase exposure to diversity related issues has the potential to influence race relations on college campuses.

• Additional research is needed to explore factors that impact Students of Color and White students’ engagement in diversity related experiences.

REFERENCES


School Belonging in LGBTQ Students as a Function of Experienced Discrimination, Diversity-Related Curriculum, and Campus Climate for Sexual Diversity

**Participants**
- 35 male, 41 female, 2 non-binary (30 gay/lesbian, 24 bisexual, 5 queer, and 14 self-labeled)
- Mean age 23.67 years (SD = 5.54)

**Recruitment**
Link to online campus diversity climate survey distributed through email to:
- Students self-identified as ethnic minority on Banner.
- Students on email listservs of A&D Center (including LGBTQA Programs), and related programs/clubs.
- Random sample of White students on Banner.

**Correlations between Diversity Climate and Academic Functioning**
- No correlation between GPA and other variables
- Significant correlations between school belonging and:
  - Inclusive Curriculum
  - Administrative response to discrimination
  - Respect for diverse beliefs
  - Atmosphere for differences in sexual orientation

**Correlations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sch. Bel.</td>
<td>.233*</td>
<td>.334*</td>
<td>.429*</td>
<td>.351*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPA</td>
<td>.047</td>
<td>.127</td>
<td>.020</td>
<td>-.049</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Rate of Discrimination**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Experienced</th>
<th>Witnessed</th>
<th>Reported</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>32.9%</td>
<td>38.4%</td>
<td>82.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seldom</td>
<td>32.9%</td>
<td>17.8%</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>17.8%</td>
<td>20.5%</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>15.1%</td>
<td>13.7%</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very often</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Discrimination Unrelated to GPA**
Independent samples t-tests showed no differences in school belonging or GPA between those who reported sexual orientation discrimination and those who did not.

**Diversity Coursework Curriculum**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># of Courses</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Sexual Orientation</th>
<th>Privilege</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>54.2%</td>
<td>35.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>27.8%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>25.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2–4</td>
<td>26.4%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>29.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 or more</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
<td>9.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Background Literature**
Gunn (2010)
- LGBT university students frequently report fears for their physical safety, a lack of queer perspectives in curricula content, and discrimination.
Mikulsky (2005)
- Connection between a supportive school climate and positive educational outcomes for LGBT youth.