

Biracial Students' Collegiate Interactions and Perceptions of the Campus Environment

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Purpose

- To explore biracial students' collegiate interactions and perceptions of the campus environment
- To build on a previous study with biracial students
 - Biracial students with White heritage were less engaged than their monoracial peers and less engaged than biracial peers who did not identify with White heritage
- To disrupt the notion that race exists in uniform categories

Research Questions

1. How do the amount of engagement in important forms of collegiate interaction and students' perceptions of the campus environment differ by race among biracial students with White racial heritage?
2. How do important forms of collegiate interaction relate to perceptions of the campus environment for biracial students with White racial heritage?
3. How do the relationships between important forms of collegiate interaction and perceptions of the campus environment vary among biracial students with White heritage?

Literature

- College impact is influenced by interactions with others on campus and perceptions of the campus environment
 - This varies by students' racial identities, BUT most of this literature focuses on monoracial students
 - Nelson Laird & Niskodé-Dosset (2010) found that multiracial students had less positive views of collegiate relationships, influencing their perceptions of campus support
- Most research on multiracial students focuses on identity development, less so on their engagement or perceptions of their college environment
- Multiracial students with White heritage may hold some privilege, but also carry a degree of stigma

Framework

- Critical multiracial theory (MultiCrit), a theoretical addition of critical race theory (CRT)
 1. MultiCrit builds on intersectionality, focusing on multiracial peoples' intersecting and multiple racial heritages. The 'mix' matters.
 2. Race is socially constructed in rigid monoracial categories, complicating understandings of race outside of a monoracial-only paradigm which leads to multiracial people often being overlooked
- This theory encourages us to focus on how multiracial students experience college differently than their monoracial peers and that they are not, themselves, a monolithic group

Data

- 2013-2016 administrations of the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) at 1,229 institutions
- NSSE measures the time and effort that undergraduate first-years and seniors at four-year colleges and universities invest in activities that relate to student learning and development
- Specifically for this study
 - Collaborative Learning
 - Discussions with Diverse Others
 - Student-Faculty Interaction
 - Quality of Interactions
 - Supportive Environment

Respondents

- To be included in the study, a student had to
 - Answer the question about racial or ethnic identification
 - Select White and only one of the other racial/ethnic identity options, not including *I prefer not to respond*
- ~15,600 first years and ~17,700 seniors
 - 41% Hispanic or Latino and White (*Latinx*)
 - 19% Asian and White (*Asian*)
 - 17% American Indian or Alaska Native and White (*Native*)
 - 12% Black or African American and White (*Black*)
 - 7% Other and White (*Other*)
 - 3% Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander and White (*Pacific*)

Analyses

- How do the amount of engagement in important forms of collegiate interaction and students' perceptions of the campus environment differ by race among biracial students with White racial heritage?
 - Engagement (CL, DD, SF, QI, SE) = race/ethnicity + controls
 - How do important forms of collegiate interaction relate to perceptions of the campus environment for biracial students with White racial heritage?
 - Perceptions (QI, SE) = Interactions (CL + DD + SF) + race/ethnicity + controls
 - How do the relationships between important forms of collegiate interaction and perceptions of the campus environment vary among biracial students with White heritage?
 - Perceptions (QI, SE) = (CL, DD, SF)*(race/ethnicity) + (CL, DD, SF) + controls
- Standardized continuous measures, effect coded racial/ethnic identities
- Controls: class level, gender identity, athlete, fraternity/sorority, first-generation status, major field, enrollment status, transfer status, living situation, sexual orientation

1. How do the amount of engagement in important forms of collegiate interaction and students' perceptions of the campus environment differ by race among biracial students with White racial heritage?

	Collaborative Learning	Discussions with Diverse Others	Student-Faculty Interaction	Quality of Interactions	Supportive Environment
<i>Native/White</i>			+	+	
<i>Asian/White</i>		-	-		
<i>Black/White</i>	-	+			+
<i>Latinx/White</i>		-			+
<i>Pacific/White</i>					
<i>Other/White</i>	+	+	+	-	-

Race/Ethnicity variables were effect coded so results should be interpreted in comparison to the average biracial student with White heritage. All results are significant, $p < .05$. Key: + Unstd B > 0, - Unstd B < 0

2. How do important forms of collegiate interaction relate to perceptions of the campus environment for biracial students with White racial heritage?

	Quality of Interactions	Supportive Environment
Discussions with Diverse Others	++	++
Collaborative Learning	+	+
Student-Faculty Interaction	+++	+++

All results are significant $p < .05$. Key: + Unstd B > 0, ++ Unstd B > .1, +++ Unstd B > .2

3. How do the relationships between important forms of collegiate interaction and perceptions of the campus environment vary among biracial students with White heritage?

- The addition of interaction items only resulted in a significant change in R^2 ($p = .001$) for participation in Collaborative Learning activities impacting Quality of Interactions
- The effect of Collaborative Learning activities was lower than average for *Native/White* students
- The effect of Collaborative Learning activities was higher than average for *Black/White* and *Other/White* students

Discussion

Reinforcement:

- Student engagement and perceptions of collegiate environments are not consistent by racial/ethnic groups
- Multiracial students engage and perceive their collegiate environment differently than their monoracial peers
- Treating multiracial students as a single group likely masks important differences within the multiracial student population

Needs further exploration

- Other/White* students: high on engagement, low on perceptions— who are these students?

Implications

- Stop treating multiracial students as a monolithic group
- Replicate this study for multiracial students with various racial heritages
- Be sensitive to areas of intersection with other aspects of identity
- Account for differences by institutional type and context
- Gather more information on the *Other* students
- Continue to improve survey measures capturing racial/ethnic/cultural identity (NSSE is testing different options in 2018)
- **Qualitatively investigate *HOW?* and *WHY?***

Thanks for joining us!

For more information about NSSE, this presentation, or our other work with multiracial student engagement:

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