The American Dream Short-Lived: The Decline of Academic Achievement and College Confidence through Acculturation, Perceptions of Ethnic Discrimination, and Concerns with Confirming Stereotypes

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THE AMERICAN DREAM SHORT-LIVED: THE DECLINE OF
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THROUGH ACCULTURATION, PERCEPTIONS OF ETHNIC
DISCRIMINATION, AND CONCERNS WITH CONFIRMING
STEREOTYPES

by

ALEXIS N MILLER

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the Honors in the Major Program in Psychology
in the College of Sciences
and in the Burnett Honors College
at the University of Central Florida
Orlando, FL

Spring Term, 2018

Thesis Chair: Grace White, Ph.D.

ABSTRACT

In this exploratory study, the goal was to examine patterns of perceived ethnic discrimination, stereotype confirmation, and acculturation within the context of a diverse, inclusive university. It was predicted that reported rates of perceived ethnic discrimination would be low, but the majority of students would still experience some type of discrimination at least once. The second hypothesis for this study was that higher levels of discrimination, acculturation and stereotype confirmation would result in lower levels of college self-efficacy and GPA. These factors were also predicted to be positively associated with each other as well. The personality trait, conscientiousness was predicted to positively associated with acculturation, college self-efficacy, and GPA. The study surveyed 50 undergraduate students from the University of Central Florida taking psychology courses through the online SONA participation system. 86.4% of participants perceived at least one instance of ethnic discrimination. Perceived ethnic discrimination was also associated with lower levels of college self-efficacy, but not GPA. Acculturation and stereotype confirmation had no significant relationships with neither college self-efficacy or GPA. High rates of acculturation to the dominant American society was associated with lower rates of perceived discrimination and stereotype confirmation, opposite of the original hypothesis. The personality trait conscientiousness was also not captured in this study, but agreeableness and openness revealed significant relationships between all ethnicity-related factors and GPA. Acculturation's role in perceptions of discrimination and stereotype concerns is discussed in detail. Limitations and future directions are addressed in the context of sample size, race and ethnicity statistics, and the complexities of discrimination and acculturation.

DEDICATION

For those that supported and propelled me,
when I could not do it by myself.

`TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Assimilating to American society and loosening cultural ties is perceived as the non-preferred pathway to success according to college students and researchers. But, although it is not considered the best approach, it inevitably happens when individuals from minority cultural groups enter and interact with the dominant culture of a new society (Alba & Nee, 1997). Additional boundaries that coexist with assimilation are prejudice and discrimination, negative group image, and acculturation stress (Rumbaut, 1994; Stodolska,2008). Specifically, discrimination and concerns with conforming to a stereotype are points of interests for this study. Pressures to conform to stereotypes about academic success affect students of color more frequently (Ancis, Sedlacek, & Mohr, 2000). These negative stereotypes can possibly affect their college adjustment and sense of isolation (Nora & Cabrera, 1996; Oliver, Rodriguez, & Mickelson, 1985). Experiencing discrimination can act as a stressor as well and negatively impact a student's college experience (Ojeda, 2012). Peer discrimination will be examined in this study as it seen to have a more negative impact on youth than adult discrimination (Tummala-Narra & Claudius, 2013).

This study is also particularly interested in how discrimination is relevant in today's multicultural society and in the context of a university that promotes diversity and equality. In a society that is becoming exceedingly multicultural and globalized, negative attitudes towards individuals from multiple backgrounds, are still ever present. Even among college students discriminating attitudes still exist(Alcade,2016). These attitudes are present within predominately white and ethnic minority settings but may be moderated and ameliorated through

diversity promotion (Alcade,2016; Padilla &Gonzalez, 2001; Spears & Hui, 2012). Participant rates of perceived discrimination were examined to capture its prevalence within an inclusion promoting university.

Another goal is to distance this research from traditional models of acculturation or straight-line assimilation theory(Alba & Nee, 1997), this theory proposes that the path of immigration is from ethnic-concentrated areas to assimilation to mainstream society over generations. This is presumed to lead to mobility in socio-economic development and educational achievement. This study operates under an opposing theoretical framework of segmented assimilation. In this framework, migrants have three different paths of assimilation. The path that allows them to preserve their heritage and cultural ties to ethnic community members is the most successful path (Rumbaut, 1994).

Based on previous research, this study explores how discrimination by peers in college and concerns with confirming to negative stereotypes affect academic achievement and ability to perform in college. Another goal is to measure how frequently these acts of discrimination are perceived by students within the context of the university. In accordance with the segmented assimilation theory, the degree to which acculturation levels affect academic achievement were measured as well. Personality was recorded to examine if there are any personality traits that are related to rates of perceived ethnic discrimination, acculturation and/or stereotype confirmation. It was initially hypothesized that low rates of perceived discrimination would be present in the form of devaluing action and verbal rejection. Negative impacts of discrimination and stereotype confirmation were predicted to be associated with a decline in academic achievement. The second hypothesis is that higher levels of discrimination, stereotype

2

concern, and acculturation to American society are positively associated with each other and both are equal predictors of academic decline. The third hypothesis is that certain personality traits such as conscientiousness are associated with higher levels of academic achievement.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Past research has focused on discrimination and its effects on immigrant student populations. In Tummula-Narra & Claudius (2013), they sought out to determine if perceived discrimination affected depressive symptoms in first-generation and second-generation youth. This study explored how perceived discrimination had different outcomes if perpetrated by peers or adults and if ethnic identity could act as a moderator. The sample population used was high school students from various minority ethnic backgrounds. Out of 100+ high school students, study ¾ of both foreign-born and U.S. born adolescents faced discrimination at least once in adolescence by adults or peers. Supporting the premise of "second-generation decline" or as acculturation increases there is a tendency for downward mobility, the study revealed only U.S. born immigrants were significantly impacted by discrimination to the point it caused depressive symptoms. The assumption for this research is that acculturation is the reason that U.S. born immigrants are more negatively impacted by discrimination. Their assimilation into American society causes them to be more aware of negative stereotypes and to have a weaker ethnic identity (Jayanti & Scott,2012). Another interesting finding was that even in a high ethnic minority population, discrimination still permeates in the everyday. This finding particularly peaks the current research's interest in peer discrimination within the context of the university. It is this research' intention to discover if the same findings apply to a four-year university that promotes diversity and equality.

The following study explored further into the academic outcomes of acculturated groups. Padilla & Gonzalez (2001) examined and compared the GPAs of first-generation, second

generation, and domestic-born Mexican students. In their secondary analysis of a population of 2,000, they found that first-generation students had higher GPAs than their second generation and domestic-born peers. They also found that generational status alone did not solely affect GPA. Speaking or learning to speak another language and schooling in Mexico contributed to academic achievement as well. Padilla and Gonzalez's findings contradict the straight-line assimilation theory that higher levels of acculturation lead to higher levels of academic achievement. It appears that closer ties to students own ethnic group such as living in Mexico for a period and speaking their native language is highly related to academic performance.

Another possible reason why generational success is associated with lower academic achievement is the longer one has been exposed to American culture, the more susceptible they are to stereotype threat. Jayanti and Scott (2012) studied grade performance in first and second-generation, as well as domestic students. Their goal was to understand if stereotype threat affected first-generation minority students, as it did domestic minority students. Also, they tried to find what factors could explain and possibly close the gap in academic performance. The sample studied included black and Hispanic undergraduate students only and excluded white and Asian students. It was understood that they were only two groups that faced stereotype threat that could affect academic performance. This sample population did not exclude any ethnic or racial groups. Jayanti and Scott (2012) findings reveal that domestic students are more susceptible to stereotype threat, and their first and second-generation peers seem to be resilient to threat. In sync with the second-generation decline, generational progression leads to increased

5

in-group racial exposure results in higher levels of externalization or lower levels of academic performance. Higher levels of acculturation seem to be negatively affecting educational attainment, and in this study, acculturation will be isolated and measured to identify whether it makes a quantifiable difference.

Personality may also be related to levels of acculturation as well as a predictor of academic achievement. Conscientiousness is a significant predictor of academic achievement and its relation to psycho-cultural constructs such as acculturation is important in examining educational outcomes. In Cano, Castillo, Davis, Lopez-Arenas, Vaquero, Thompson, and Salvidar (2012) examined acculturation, enculturation, ethnic identity, and conscientiousness effects on educational expectations. They surveyed 1,035 low-income middle schoolers in rural Texas. Higher levels of acculturation predicted higher educational expectations from students.

Also, strong ethnic identity promoted conscientiousness which led to higher educational expectations as well. Opposing Jayanti and Scott (2012) research and supporting the straight-line assimilation theory Cano et al. (2012) observations provide a contrast to the expected hypothesis. Conscientiousness relation to educational achievement and acculturation is of interest in this study.

In Ojeda, Navarro, Meza, & Arbona (2012) stereotype confirmation and perceived discrimination were measured and correlated with life satisfaction. The study sampled Latino college students. Most of these students were domestic young adults. Perceived discrimination did not predict life satisfaction but concerns about conforming to a stereotype did negatively impact life satisfaction. It was hypothesized that higher levels of acculturation may lead to less awareness of discrimination. Although, Griffin, Cunningham, and Mwangi (2016) who studied

6

black immigrants' perception of discrimination finding were the opposite. It is in this study, that

the findings may add to this discourse of acculturation and the saliency of discrimination. Also,

this study adds to whether internal concerns of stereotype confirmation or external concerns of

discrimination result in higher levels of academic decline.

METHOD

This study utilized correlation statistical tests. Factors of perceived discrimination, stereotype confirmation, personality, ethnic identity, college self-efficacy, acculturation levels, and academic performance were examined using validated and reliable scales.

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Participants

50 undergraduate students participated in an online survey through Qualtrics. Although a total of 50 participants were evaluated in this study, the following sample statistics are based off 10 participants due to an error in the Qualtrics system. Participants ages ranged from 18-42 ($M=$ 27, $SD=$ 8.23). The sample population also consisted of two freshmen, four juniors, and six seniors at the University of Central Florida. The partial sample was majority female (8 females; 2 males). Participants varied in generational status: first generation(N=1), second generation(N=3), third generation (N=2), fourth generation (N=4). They were recruited from undergraduate psychology courses at the University of Central Florida.

Procedure

Participants were recruited using University of Central Florida's SONA system. SONA is the UCF Psychology Research Participation System that students can access online to participate in ongoing research studies. The study received approval from the IRB (see appendix A) Participants completed a survey questionnaire through Qualtrics. They accessed the survey through the SONA website and fill out a series of questions. To ensure anonymity the only

identifying information questions were about demographics. Participants received credit through SONA for enrolled courses in psychology.

Measures

GPA.

Participants were asked to record their overall GPA and semester GPA on 4.0 scale.

College self-efficacy.

The College Self-Efficacy Inventory (CSEI; Solberg, O'Brien, Villareal, Kennel, & Davis, 1993; Dewitz, Woosley, &Walsh, 2009) measures how much confidence college students have in various aspects of college. It is a 20-item questionnaire that uses a Likert scale of 1(being not at all confident) and 10(being extremely confident). Sample statements are "Ask a professor a question" and "Write course papers". Total scores of the CSEI are obtained by summing the responses on the (20) items. Total scores can range from (0 to 200). Higher total scores reflect a greater sense of college self-efficacy. The Cronbach alpha's coefficient for this scale is above .89 (see Appendix B).

Perceived ethnic discrimination.

The Perceived Ethnic Discrimination Questionnaire (PEDQ; ; Contrada, Ashmore, Gary, Coups, Egeth, Sewell, & Chasse, 2001) is a 17-item scale that measures ethnic-related stress. The Questionnaire is measured on a 1(never) to 7(very often) Likert scale. It was used to measure peer ethnic-related stress. The overall scale had a Cronbach Alpha value of .93. There are 5 subscales within it: Verbal Rejection, Avoidance, Exclusion, Devaluing Action, Threat of Violence, and Aggression. The 17-item scale include questions from the Verbal Rejection

subscale, "How often have you been subjected to ethnic name-calling (e.g. 'wop', 'nigger')?" (α=.71). Sample questions from the Avoidance subscale are "How often have others avoided social contact with you because ethnicity?" (α=.85). Devaluing Action subscale questions include "How often have others have others had low expectations of you because of your ethnicity?" (α=.87).The Threat of Violence subscale questions include, "How often have others threatened to hurt you because of your ethnicity?"(α=.89). Aggression subscale questions include, "How often have others damaged your property because of your ethnicity?". The aggression subscale was unreliable(α<.70) and was excluded from this study. The scale scoring ranges 17 to 119, higher scores indicating higher levels of perceived discrimination (See Appendix C).

Stereotype confirmation.

The Stereotype Confirmation Scale(SCCS; Contrada, Ashmore, Gary, Coups, Egeth, Sewell, & Chasse, 2001) measures concerns about performing stereotypical behaviors that are connected to their ethnic group. It is measured on a 1(never) to 7(always) 11 item Likert scale. The 10 item modified scale questions due to error deletion of the last question resembled this format "How often have you been concerned that by playing certain sports you might appear to be confirming a stereotype about your ethnic group?". The total scores ranged from 10-70, a higher score represents a greater concern with stereotype confirmation. The Cronbach alpha's coefficient for this scale is .94 (see Appendix D).

Personality.

Personality was measured using the Big Five Inventory (BFI; John, Donahue, and Kentle, 1999). It is a 44-item inventory that measures participants on the Big Five Factors of personality:

extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness. Measured on a Likert scale from 1(Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree), sample statements include, "Is a reliable worker" and "Is outgoing and sociable". The extraversion subscale includes questions such as "Is talkative" and Cronbach Alpha for this study was .84. The scale scoring for extraversion ranges from 8-40(8 questions), higher scores indicate a more extroverted personality. The subscale for agreeableness sample questions are "Tends to find fault in others" and "Starts quarrels with others" (α= .80). The score range is 9-45(9 questions), greater the scores the more agreeable a person is. Conscientiousness is measured using questions such as "Is a reliable worker" (α= .69). Since the Cronbach Alpha for conscientiousness was under .70 due to inconsistency in responses and its results were not included in this study. Higher scores indicate higher levels of conscientiousness (9-45). Neuroticism questions include " Is relaxed, handles stress well" (α=.88). The neuroticism subscale score ranged from 8-40, higher scores indicate more neuroticism. The openness scale sample question format is "Likes to reflect, play with ideas" (α=.80). The scores for this scale range from 10-50, lower scores indicate lower levels of the openness trait (see Appendix E).

Levels of acculturation.

Levels of acculturation are measured using the Stephenson Multigroup Acculturation Scale (SMAS; Stephenson, 2000). This 32-item scale measures the extent to which participants are connected to the non-dominant and dominant culture. The dominant culture scale has 15 items, and the nondominant culture scale has 17 items. For this study, the nondominant culture scale was modified and include only 16 items. The item that was removed was "When I pray, I use my native language". This item was removed due to its religiosity that may not apply to the

11

sample population and may affect reliability and validity of the measure. Items are measured on a Likert scale, 1(false) and (4) true. A sample statement from the dominant culture scale is "I think in English" (α=.90). The dominant culture scale scores ranged from 15-60, A sample statement from the non-dominant culture scale is "I eat traditional foods from native culture" (α=.76). The nondominant culture scale scores ranged from 16-64 (see Appendix F).

RESULTS

The stated hypotheses for this study was that (1) the majority would report perceived ethnic discrimination, but the rates of perceived ethnic discrimination would be low; (2) Perceived ethnic discrimination, levels of acculturation, and stereotype confirmation would be positively related with each other, and predict lower levels of reported GPA, and college self-efficacy; (3) The personality trait of conscientiousness would be associated with higher levels of acculturation and GPA. Frequencies, descriptive statistics, and correlation statistical tests were performed to test these hypotheses.

Descriptive statistics were performed on all the scales used to measure the stated hypothesis. The average score of acculturation to dominant culture was high (M=52.65, SD=4.90). Average acculturation levels to nondominant culture were equally as high (M=52.31, SD=9.18). The scores for the dominant culture subscale ranged from 15-60, and the scores for the nondominant subscale ranged from 16-64. The average participant reported being as assimilated to dominant American culture as they were connected to their nondominant ethnic culture. Stereotype confirmation concerns were relatively low on average (M=23.98, SD=14.81). Participants reported on average high levels of college self-efficacy (M=163.98, SD=26.78). The average overall and semester GPA was relatively high (M=3.42, SD= .47; M=3.65, SD= 5.59. The personality trait, neuroticism was slightly above the possible median in the sample with a score range of 8-40 (M=25.59, SD=6.85). Participants reported above median levels of agreeableness as the minimum to maximum possible scores ranges from 9-45 (M=35.11,

SD=5.22). BFI trait openness above the median in the sample as well, with theoretical scores

ranging from

10-50(*M*=37.43, *SD*= 5.59). Extraversion was around the median, possible scores ranging from 8 to 40 (*M*=25.42, *SD*=5.79).

Perceived Ethnic Discrimination

Descriptive statistics and frequencies were measured to examine the rates of perceived ethnic discrimination. Overall rates of perceived discrimination were relatively low with a score range from 17(no perceived ethnic discrimination) to 78(above moderate levels of perceived ethnic discrimination with a theoretical maximum score of 119(*M*=32.3, *SD*=17.1).

Even though participants reported low rates of discrimination, the majority did perceive at least one instance of ethnic discrimination (86.4%) as predicted. 84% of the sample did not receive threats of aggression, but at least 52% of the participants experienced other types of ethnic discrimination. Specifically, as hypothesized verbal rejection and devaluing action were experienced more by students with 73% and 64%, respectively, reporting at least one instance of perceived discrimination. It is important to qualify that even though large percentages of students did report discrimination, the overall level of discrimination perceived was low.

Personality

Although the scale for conscientiousness was unreliable it was positively associated college self-efficacy which partially supports the hypothesis. Results from the correlation statistical tests revealed that the BFI personality trait agreeableness was negatively associated with semester GPA(r(48)=-.314, *p*=.04) and lower levels of stereotype confirmation(r(48)=-.363, *p*=.02). More agreeable participants reported lower

14

GPAs and were less concerned with confirming stereotypes about their group. Higher

levels of agreeableness also were related to lower rates of perceived ethnic discrimination

overall, specifically for the constructs of devaluing action and avoidance (r(48)= -.357,

p=.02; r(48)=-.345, p=.03; r(48)=-.322, p=.04). Participants that tended to be more

agreeable, perceived less discrimination and experienced less discriminating acts of

avoidance and devaluation. Also, higher levels of agreeableness were associated with

slightly higher levels of acculturation to dominant culture (r(48)=.397, p=.01).

Individuals more acculturated to the dominant American society tended to be more

agreeable. BFI personality trait openness was also correlated with higher levels of

perceived ethnic discrimination subscale avoidance(r(48)=.329, p=.03). The more open a

person is, the more they perceived they were being avoided due to ethnic background.

Acculturation

Correlational statistical tests were conducted; Opposite to our hypothesis, participants

that were more acculturated to dominant culture perceived less discrimination (r(50)=-.715,

p<.05), specifically verbal rejection, avoidance, and devaluing action (r(50)=-.475, p<.05;

r(50)=-.559, p<.05; r(50)=-.756, p<.05). Also, differing from the original hypothesis, those who

more assimilated to dominant, American culture had less concern confirming to stereotypes

(r(50)=-.458, p<.05).

College Self-Efficacy

      Consistent with the original hypothesis, participants that had experienced higher levels of perceived discrimination specifically verbal rejection and avoidance had slightly lower levels of college self-efficacy($r(50)=-.378$, $p=.02$; $r(50)=-.371$, $p=.02$) according to correlational statistical tests. Students confidence in their ability to succeed in college were significantly affect by verbal disparaging remarks and avoidance due to ethnic group.

DISCUSSION

The current research intention was to explore levels of ethnic discrimination present within a university setting and measure its effects on academic achievement and confidence. Acculturation and stereotype confirmation were two related concepts that based on previous literature have a significant effect on academic achievement. Personality traits were explored to understand their role in academic achievement and how they are related to negative ethnic factors.

The initial hypothesis for this study was that the majority participants would report low levels perceived of ethnic discrimination, but types of discrimination such as verbal rejection and devaluing action would be relatively higher. Although reported instances were particularly low, the majority did experience at least one instance of discrimination. Being verbally rejected and devalued by their peers was particularly salient for this group. The act or process of not being perceived as equal by peers is a common indirect form of discrimination in the post-racist, millennial age. Jokes, excuses, and claims to not be racist or xenophobic are common forms of indirect discrimination and cultural insensitivity in the 21st century (Alcalde, 2016). As supported by Tummala-Narra et al. (2013) even high rates of ethnic/racial diversity can coexist with different forms of racism. The amount of ethnic diversity has been supported to predict higher rates of perceived discrimination (Seaton & Yip, 2009; Welch, Sigelman, & Bledsoe, 2001). But, that does not mean that universities promotion of diversity and inclusion policies are counterproductive. Even though the majority reported at least of one incident of ethnic discrimination, the amount of discrimination reported was relatively low. The presence of a

diverse student body is not sufficient to combat levels of perceived ethnic discrimination, but

valuing diversity as a benefit, not an obligation acts a better protective factor. Universities that

value diversity, not solely filling a racial/ethnic quota based on previous research are predicted to

have lower rates of perceived discrimination as well from students (Christia Spears & Hui,

2012). It is also important to note that low levels of discrimination may be due to limitations in

race/ethnic demographics info. This and other findings will be further explained in the limitation

and future directions section.

Perceived ethnic discrimination was also predicted to affect academic achievement. Even,

though it did not affect GPA it did affect college self-efficacy. Perceiving that one is verbally

rejected or avoided because of their ethnicity affected college confidence the most. This may be

due lack of sense of belonging in a university setting (Xiang, Wong, and Hou, 2018; Greene,

Way, and Pahl, 2006). Perceiving ethnic discrimination is also maladaptive to an individual and

negatively impacts physical, mental, and behavioral health. Valuing diversity has been supported

to act as a preventive measure, but having comprehensive multicultural counseling available to

students that are struggling can also be used as an effective as an intervention measure (Cobb,

Dong, Meca, Schwartz, & Xie, 2017). Furthermore, in the context of college confidence, a

multicultural perspective may also be useful in academic advising. High rates of perceived

discrimination may even have the possibility to affect GPA, even though there was no significant

relationship between the two in this study.

Stereotype confirmation concern had no significant relationships with either

college self-efficacy or GPA. Although in Ojeda et.al 2012 it was demonstrated that concerns

with stereotype confirmation affect life satisfaction, this does not seem to translate over into

academic achievement. Stereotype confirmation concern may be too general of a construct to display a significant effect. Past studies that focused on specifically stereotype threat, concerns with confirming to an academic stereotype of a specific ethnic group, are a better predictor of academic achievement (Jayanti & Scott,2012; Ancis, 2000).

It was predicted that conscientiousness would be related to academic achievement and acculturation. Although, conscientiousness was unable to be measured in this study due to the unreliability of the scale, agreeableness and openness both had significant correlations with ethnicity-related factors. Agreeableness and openness revealed significant relationships between personality traits and ethnicity-related factors. Agreeableness was linked to lower rates of stereotype confirmation, perceived ethnic discrimination, and higher rates of acculturation. Participants that tended to be more agreeable assimilated to society more readily, are more involved in dominant American culture, and therefore less aware of their dominant culture. Uniquely, they also had lower GPAs which may be due to lack of resistance or higher rates of acceptance of grades and external circumstances. Participants that displayed the personality trait of openness perceived more discrimination in the form of avoidance. Personality is not a purely biological factor is influenced by an individual's history, culture, and environment (Cano et al., 2012). Understanding which psycho-cultural constructs are significant in influencing personality and promoting high educational achievement is key to future research with immigrants and minority students. Promoting ethnicity-related factors that are associated with "positive" personality traits and academic performance can help to close the achievement gap for immigrants and minority students. Also, inversely understanding personality's role in academic achievement and ethnicity stress-related factors may help identify which groups are more

19

susceptible to psychological effects of discrimination, stereotype threat, and poor academic outcomes. Psycho-cultural constructs can promote positive personality development, as well as potentially harmful personality traits such as neuroticism (Xiang et al., 2018). Examining the role of these constructs and personality is key in predicting academic outcomes.

In opposition of the original hypothesis, acculturation the dominant American society resulted in lower levels of perceived ethnic discrimination and concern with stereotype confirmation aligning with Ojeda et al. (2012) hypothesis, but conflicting Griffin et al. (2016) research results. These results may have also influenced by participants almost equitably being acculturated and involved dominant and non-dominant culture. Individuals ethnic ties may have protected them from levels of ethnic discrimination as demonstrated in Griffin et al. (2016).

A secondary explanation supported by a research study conducted by Abdulrahim, James, Yamout, and Baker (2012) which examined how whiteness affects perceived discrimination and psychological distress. The results supported that those more assimilated into western culture perceive fewer encounters of discrimination. The reason for this may be that assimilation into U.S. culture may result in fewer instances of discrimination due to a simultaneous loss in ethnic ties, distinction, and otherness. Even though in Griffin et al. (2016) more acculturated, native-born, black students reported more perceived discrimination and marginalization, this finding may be specific to black ethnic groups. Their lack of ability to blend in and ethnic identity to become invisible as well as claim whiteness may make this group more vulnerable to discrimination and marginalization. In Ojeda et al. (2012) and Abdulrahim et al. (2012) work with Latino and Arab participants respectively, may have captured not only the effects of acculturation but also the impact of whiteness and assimilation to "white culture" on

20

perceived ethnic discrimination. Future research should examine whether it is assimilation into American culture or the ability to identify as white affects rates of perceived discrimination more readily.

Acculturation to dominant or nondominant culture did not have any significant relationships with college self-efficacy or GPA, and this study was unable to add to the discourse of assimilation theory.

Limitations and Future Directions

Even though this study was able to explore rates of discrimination and relationships between ethnicity-stress related factors, it still had its shortcomings. It had several limitations that affect its results to be generalizable. The size of the sample population was relatively small and limited, with only 50 undergraduate students from psychology courses participating. The other significant issue with the sample was that it only captured partial demographic information from the sample population and race/ethnicity was not included in these demographics. Although the current study did produce significant results, these results cannot be fully interpreted without a complete racial/culture as well as an immigrant status demographic background. Due to the lack of racial/ethnic background of the sample and the known demographic information of the population that the sample was taken from, the majority may have been mostly white. This could have significantly affected all the ethnicity-related factors that were measured due to lack of relation or experience with the constructs being measured. Specifically, it may explain why the study captured such low rates of discrimination; if most of the sample was white their experience with discrimination would be limited. Any experiences with stereotype confirmation may be

difficult to capture as well as there are limited negative stereotypes associated with being white and could possibly explain why it produced no significant associations. This also may explain why participants reported their immersion in nondominant culture was equitable to their immersion in dominant culture on the acculturation scale. If the sample was majority white, it would be difficult for the sample to conceptualize the construct of nondominant culture. Although generational status was partially recorded, the distribution of 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th generation is unknown, and this possibly affected acculturation levels as well. The findings of this research cannot be accurately interpreted without appropriate demographics, and replication is needed in future studies to further support or reject the current findings. Possible future directions would be to examining trends of discrimination and acculturation within the context of specific ethnicities may highlight specific challenges not readily captured in this study. Exploring students' perceptions of diversity and rates of perceived discrimination across different university settings should be included in future research. Utilizing a qualitative method to capture student's perceptions would be a more in-depth approach to examine how minority and immigrant students perceive their place in a university setting nationally.

CONCLUSION

Creating a welcoming environment for minority and immigrants to excel in a college space is essential to close the gap of academic success. Minority and immigrant students do not only feel pressure from classes but also pressures to steer away from stereotypes, to assimilate into mainstream society, and how to handle perceived discrimination based on their ethnicity. These students represent a marginalized group in a privileged place in society, college, that are vulnerable to academic failings. Continuing research with this population is vital to assist in creating equal spaces, emotionally healthier students, and increased generational succession.

APPENDIX A: IRB LETTER OF APPROVAL

Determination of Exempt Human Research

From: **UCF Institutional Review Board #1**
                   FWA00000351, IRB00001138

To: **Grace A White, Alexis Nicole Miller**

Date: **March 12, 2018**

Dear Researcher:

On , the IRB reviewed the following activity as human participant research that is exempt from regulation:

Type of Review:	Exempt Determination – Category 2 – Adult Participants Online Surveys; n=500
Project Title:	The American Dream Short-Lived: The Effects of Immigrant Generation Status, Perceptions of Discrimination, and Concerns with Negative Stereotypes
Investigator:	Grace A White
IRB Number:	SBE-18-13808
Funding Agency:	
Grant Title:	
Research ID:	N/A

This determination applies only to the activities described in the IRB submission and does not apply should any changes be made. If changes are made and there are questions about whether these changes affect the exempt status of the human research, please contact the IRB. When you have completed your research, please submit a Study Closure request in iRIS so that IRB records will be accurate.

In the conduct of this research, you are responsible to follow the requirements of the Investigator Manual.

This letter is signed by:

Signature applied by Jennifer Neal-Jimenez on 03/12/2018 04:12:39 PM EDT

Designated Reviewer

APPENDIX B: COLLEGE SELF-EFFICACY

The following 20 items concern your confidence in various aspects of college. Using the scale below, please indicate how confident you are as a student at UCF that you could successfully complete the following tasks. If you are extremely confident, mark a 10. If you are not at all confidence, mark a 1. If you are more or less confident, find the number between 10 and 1 that best describes you. Item responses are aggregated across all student respondents in order to better understand how confident the average UCF student feels. Levels of confidence vary from person to person, and there are no right or wrong answers; just answer honestly.

1. Make new friends at college.

2. Divide chores with others you live with.

3. Talk to university staff.

4. Manage time effectively.

5. Ask a question in class.

6. Participate in class discussions.

7. Get a date when you want one.

8. Research a term paper.

9. Do well on your exams.

10. Join a student organization.

11. Talk to your professors.

12. Join an intramural sports team.

13. Ask a professor a question.

14. Take good class notes.

15. Get along with others you live with.

16. Divide space in your residence.

17. Understand your textbooks.

18. Keep up to date with your schoolwork.

19. Write course papers.

20. Socialize with others you live with.

APPENDIX C: PERCEIVED ETHNIC DISCRIMINATION

Please think back over the past three months and then, unless instructed otherwise, for each item below indicate how often the event occurred using the following scale:

We would like to know about acts of discrimination that have been directed against or toward you personally during the past two months by your peers. Please indicate by scoring your experiences with discrimination on a 1 to 5 scale(1 being never to 5 being very often).

1. How often have you been subjected to offensive ethnic comments aimed directly at you, spoken either in your presence or behind your back?

2. How often have you been exposed to offensive comments about your ethnic group (e.g. stereotypic statements, offensive jokes), spoken either in your presence or behind your back?

3. How often have you been subjected to ethnic name calling (e.g. "wop", "nigger")?

Avoidance

4. How often have others avoided physical contact with you because of your ethnicity?

5. How often have others avoided social contact with you because of your ethnicity?

6. How often have others outside of your ethnic group made you feel as though you don't fit in because of your dress, speech, or other characteristics related to your ethnicity?

Devaluating action

7. How often have others had low expectations of you because of your ethnicity?

8. How often has it been implied or suggested that because of your ethnicity you must be unintelligent?

30

9. How often has it been implied or suggested that because of your ethnicity you must be dishonest?

10. How often has it been implied or suggested that because of your ethnicity you must be violent or dangerous?

11. How often has it been implied or suggested that because of your ethnicity you must be dirty?

12. How often has it been implied or suggested that because of your ethnicity you must be lazy?

Threat of violence

13. How often have others threatened to hurt you because of your ethnicity?

14. How often have others threatened to damage your property because of your ethnicity?

Aggression

15. How often have others physically hurt you or intended to physically hurt you because of your ethnicity?

16. How often have others damaged your property because of your ethnicity?

17. How often have you been subjected to nonverbal harassment because of your ethnicity (e.g. being framed/set up, being given "the finger")?

APPENDIX D: STEREOTYPE CONFIRMATION

Often times, members of an ethnic group are concerned that their behaviors or the things they do appear to confirm stereotypes about their ethnic group. Think back over the past three months and tell us how often you have been concerned about appearing to confirm a stereotype about your ethnic group. Select a response from 1(never) to 7(always).

1. How often have you been concerned that by eating certain foods you might appear to be confirming a stereotype about your ethnic group?

2. How often have you been concerned that by talking a certain way you might appear to be confirming a stereotype about your ethnic group?

3. How often have you been concerned that by dressing a certain way you might appear to be confirming a stereotype about your ethnic group?

4. How often have you been concerned that by playing certain sports you might appear to be confirming a stereotype about your ethnic group?

5. How often have you been concerned that by attending or participating in certain social activities you might appear to be confirming a stereotype about your ethnic group?

6. How often have you been concerned that by taking your studies too seriously you might appear to be confirming a stereotype about your ethnic group?

7. How often have you been concerned that by owning certain things you might appear to be confirming a stereotype about your ethnic group?

8. How often have you been concerned that by shopping in certain stores or eating at certain restaurants you might appear to be confirming a stereotype about your ethnic group?

9. How often have you been concerned that the way you look (your physical appearance) might appear to confirm a stereotype about your ethnic group?

10. How often have you been concerned that by doing certain household tasks you might appear to be confirming a stereotype about your ethnic group?

APPENDIX E: PERSONALITY

The Big Five Inventory (BFI) Here are a number of characteristics that may or may not apply to you. For example, do you agree that you are someone who likes to spend time with others? Please write a number next to each statement to indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with that statement. 1 (Strongly Disagree), 2 (Disagree) 3 (Neither Agree nor Disagree) 4 (Agree) 5(Strongly Agree).I see Myself as Someone Who...

1. Is talkative

2. Tends to find fault with others

3. Does a thorough job

4. Is depressed, blue

5. Is original, comes up with new ideas

6. Is reserved

7. Is helpful and unselfish with others

8. Can be somewhat careless

9. Is relaxed handles stress well

10. Is curious about many different things

11. Is full of energy

12. Starts quarrels with others

13. Is a reliable worker

14. Can be tense

15. Is ingenious, a deep thinker

16. Generates a lot of enthusiasm

17. Has a forgiving nature

18. Tends to be disorganized

19. Worries a lot

20. Has an active imagination

21. Tends to be quiet

22. Is generally trusting

23. Tends to be lazy

24. Is emotionally stable, not easily upset

25. Is inventive

26. Has an assertive personality

27. Can be cold and aloof

28. Perseveres until the task is finished

29. Can be moody

30. Values artistic, aesthetic experiences

31. Is sometimes shy, inhibited

32. Is considerate and kind to almost everyone

33. Does things efficiently

34. Remains calm in tense situations

35. Prefers work that is routine

36. Is outgoing, sociable

37. Is sometimes rude to others

38. Makes plans and follows through with them

39. Gets nervous easily

40. Likes to reflect, play with ideas

41. Has few artistic interests

42. Likes to cooperate with others

43. Is easily distracted

44. Is sophisticated in art, music, or literature

APPENDIX F: LEVELS OF ACCULTURATION

The following questions will ask how immersed you are in your culture and familiar you are with your ethnic group. You will be asked about your native customs such as language, history are relevant to you, "1" being completely false to "4" being completely true. The term "native" refers to the country of your ethnic group and not the country you reside in.

1. I know how to speak my native language.

2. I like to speak my native language.

3. I speak my native language with my friends and acquaintances from my country of origin.

4. I know how to read and write in my native language.

5. I feel comfortable speaking my native language.

6. I speak my native language at home.

7. I like to listen to music of my ethnic group.

8. I speak my native language with my spouse or partner.

9. I have never learned to speak the language of my native country.

10. I am informed about current affairs in my native country.

11. I attend social functions with people from my native country.

12. I am familiar with the history of my native country.

13. I think in my native language.

14. I stay in close contact with family members and relatives in my native country.

15. I regularly read magazines of my ethnic group (online or physical magazine).

16. I eat traditional foods from my native culture.

17. I attend social functions with (Anglo) American people.

18. I have many (Anglo) American acquaintances.

19. I speak English at home.

20. I know how to prepare (Anglo) American foods.

21. I am familiar with important people in American history.

22. I think in English.

23. I speak English with my spouse or partner.

24. I feel totally comfortable with (Anglo) American people.

25. I understand English, but I'm not fluent in English.

26. I am informed about current affairs in the United States.

27. I like to eat American foods.

28. I regularly read an American newspaper (online or in person).

29. I feel comfortable speaking English.

30. I feel at home in the United States.

31. I feel accepted by (Anglo) Americans.

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