

ORAL PRESENTATION

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Perseverance through Culture: The relationship between ethnic identity, campus engagement and resiliency.

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Introduction

According to Pacific University's Institutional Research and Assessment Data Center (2018; 2021), the population of Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) undergraduate students has increased from 49% to 53% within three years. Despite transitioning into the representative group on the College of Arts and Sciences campus, there are a lack of non-student-led resources and programs dedicated solely for BIPOC students.

Supporting a student's development of ethnic identity is essential for academic success, student belonging, mental well-being, and high self-esteem (Toomey & Umaña-Taylor, 2012). When African Americans who reported a strong connection to their ethnic identity experienced discrimination, they reported feeling less emotional distress and experienced said distress for a shorter period of time (Kiang et al., 2006). High resiliency in the face of adversity is linked to a person's connection to their ethnic identity (Kiang et al., 2006). Through a combination of genetics, social support, and personality traits, a person's ability to manage their negative emotions in the face of adversity and tragedy is strengthened (Wagnild, 2016). On a college campus, social support is built through community involvement and participation in social activities. As a student participates in different activities, they develop a stronger sense of connection with their school, which leads to academic excellence (Baron & Corbin, 2012).

This study intends to examine the relationship between ethnic identity and campus engagement in relation to developing resiliency for BIPOC students. We predict that there will be significant, positive relations between all three concepts. As a student strengthens their ethnic identity and continues to be active on a college campus, we hypothesize that their well-being as a result of resiliency will improve their recovery to undesirable events.

Empirical Question

Is there a significant relationship between ethnic identity, frequency of campus engagement, and resilient behaviors?

Participants

We will convenience sample (i.e., list serves, in-class announcements, emails, and fliers) from the roughly 1,700 undergraduate students at Pacific University. We anticipate a sample size between 50-100 participants with a mean age of 21 years with a greater proportion of females to males given Pacific University has a ratio of 59% females to 41% (Pacific University Office of Institutional Research and assessment, 2021). There will be no exclusionary criteria for this study beyond 18 years of age.

Proposed Method

The materials for this study included a standard demographic measure as well as the following published, cited measures:

Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM) is a 14 item self-report measure of ethnic identity strength using a one-to-four Likert scale assessing ethnic identity development and commitment (Phinney, 1997).

Resiliency Scale (RS-14) is a 13-item self-report measure using a one-to-seven Likert scale assessing the five different characteristics that contribute to resiliency: Purpose, Perseverance, Equanimity, Self-Reliance, and Authenticity. (Wagnild, 2009).

Survey on Campus Engagement is an unpublished survey on campus engagement and frequency that is specific to Pacific University and will have a compiled list of all ethnic and cultural clubs and activities available at Pacific University.

Each participant will complete the three self-report measures and a demographic survey provided on the Qualtrics XM™ Online Survey Software. The demographic questions and all previously published assessments will follow an informed consent page with an implied consent protocol, as required by Institutional Review Boards. At the conclusion of the study, participants will receive a debriefing form, the contact information of the student investigators and faculty research advisor, and an electronic receipt that may be printed for use in classes that provide credit for research participation. Appropriate statistical analyses will be completed using SPSS® (v.28.0).

Proposed Results

We will assess our predictions that students with stronger ethnic identities and a higher frequency of campus engagement will report more characteristics of resiliency using Pearson's r correlations. Additionally, we will conduct two ANOVAs for campus engagement and resiliency. For significant results or interactions, another effect size estimate will be completed. In addition, Bonferroni's adjustment will be done to determine within variable differences. We will also conduct Cronbach's alpha coefficient for all three assessments to determine participant score homogeneity. All data will be analyzed using IBM® SPSS® Statistical Software (v.21).

Conclusion

The purpose of our study is to promote mental well-being and a sense of community for BIPOC students. We anticipate the results will support our three hypotheses: (1) there will be a significant, positive relationship between ethnic identity and resiliency, (2) there will be a significant, positive correlation between ethnic identity and campus engagement, and (3) there will be a significant, positive relationship between campus engagement and resiliency. We acknowledge that gender and geographical locations are possible confounds in our proposal, and we account for possible gender differences in our statistics. If our predictions are supported, we hope to use these findings to promote more robust cultural programs and activities for our growing BIPOC student body. In addition to supporting our current student population, we also aim to apply these results to increase Pacific University's BIPOC student enrollment and retention rates.

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