

Did Black Immigrant Teens Change Their Thinking About Race During the Dual Pandemics of 2020 -2021?

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Introduction

- **Year 2020:** The murder of Mr. George Floyd layered on top of COVID-19 increased protests and renewed attention of BLM movement.
- **Racism in environment** plays an integral part of the context of social and **identity development** for Black teens in the United States.
- This research exemplifies the importance of understanding how perceived discrimination can affect a teen's thinking regarding race as the culture of **Whiteness** poses **risks** to the **health** and **well-being** of Black and immigrant communities in the United States (Edwards et al., 2019; Ferguson et al., 2021).
- The African American culture is salient in the acculturation experience of Black immigrant and refugee teens (**tridimensional acculturation** theory; Ferguson & Bornstein, 2014).

Hypotheses:

- 1) Perceived discrimination is related **positively** to teens' likelihood of changing thoughts about race.
- 2) The association above will be **stronger** for teens who have adopted more African American culture in their behavioral preferences (for entertainment, food, friendships).

Methods & Analyses

- **Participants in Food, Culture, and Health Study (n=89)**
 - Mostly 2nd generation Somali & Jamaican teens from immigrant and refugee backgrounds
 - Mean age: 14.1 years, range = 11-18 years
- **Online surveys facilitated via Zoom**
 - Youth reported on a single item measure whether they have thought more about race or in new ways about race since the start of the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic.
 - Everyday Discrimination Scale (Sternthal et al., 2011).
 - Language, Identity, and Behavior Scale (LIB) (Birman et al., 2001)
- **Analyses** included descriptives, correlations, and regressions
 - Logistic Regression calculated the odds of youths' changes in thoughts about race based on teens' perceptions of discrimination, with African American Behavioral Orientation as a moderator controlling for White American and Heritage Cultural orientations

Table

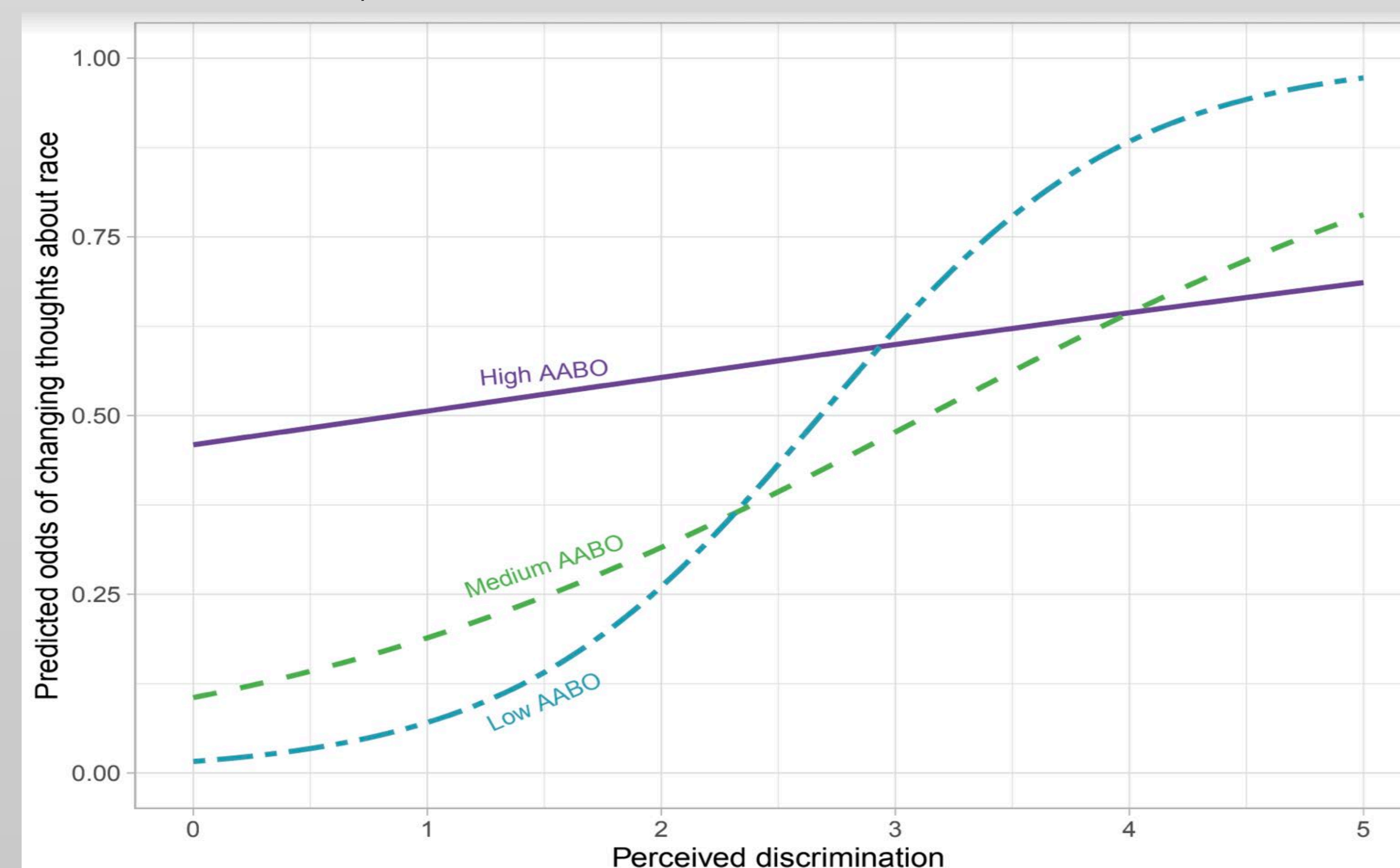
Table 1: Means, Standard Deviations, and Pearson Correlations for Youth in the Food, Culture, and Health Study (n=89)

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5
1. Changed thinking about race in 2020-2021	46.1%*	-	-				
2. Average perceived discrimination	2.26	1.05	0.33**	-			
3. Average African American behavioral orientation	2.77	0.73	0.19	0.077	-		
4. Average heritage culture behavioral orientation	2.51	0.55	-0.077	-0.17	0.32**	-	
5. Average White American behavioral orientation	2.98	0.59	0.154	0.082	0.091	0.0209	-

Note: M and SD represent mean and standard deviation, respectively. The ** symbol indicates a correlation with $p < .01$. *Reflects youth who endorsed thinking more about race or thinking in new ways about race since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Graph

Figure 1: Probability of Black Teenagers From Immigrant and Refugee Backgrounds Reporting a Change or Increase in Thoughts About Race From 2020-2021 Given That They Have High African American Behavioral Orientation (AABO; Solid Purple Line), Medium AABO (Dashed Green Line), or Low AABO (Dot Dashed Blue Line)



*AABO: African American Behavioral Orientation

Results

- **Yes -- 47% of teens were thinking more/differently about race**
- **Perceived discrimination was significantly related** to teens' reports of changing thoughts about race ($\beta = 3.41, p = 0.014$)
- **African American Behavioral Orientation (AABO) moderated** the effect of discrimination on changed thinking about race ($\beta = -0.92, p = 0.036$)
- **The regression slope was steepest for low -AABO teens** ($\beta = 1.534$; blue line), followed by medium-AABO teens ($\beta = 0.682$; green line), with high-AABO teens having the flattest slope ($\beta = 0.189$; purple line).

Conclusion

- Nearly half of the Black immigrant/refugee teens were thinking more or differently about race during the dual pandemics.
- Higher reports of discrimination experienced by Black immigrant teens were linked to higher likelihood of thinking more/differently about race during the dual pandemics, especially for teens who were not as immersed in African American culture (blue and green lines).
- For teens who were already quite immersed in African American culture (purple), changing thoughts about race were not as strongly linked to their experiences of racism.
- One limitation of these analyses were limited research studies regarding this topic.
- **Next steps:** Further study the relationship between identity, discrimination, and changes in race thoughts among other ethnicities.

References & Acknowledgements

- Edwards, F., Lee, H., & Esposito, M. (2019). Risk of being killed by police use of force in the United States by age, race —ethnicity, and sex. Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, 116(34), 16793 -16798. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1821204116>
- Ferguson, G. M., & Bornstein, M. H. (2014). Tridimensional (3D) acculturation: Culture and adaptation of Black Caribbean immigrants in the United States. In R. Dimitrova, M., Bender, & F. van de Vijver (Eds), *Global perspectives on wellbeing in immigrant families* (pp. 31-51). New York: Springer Science Business + Media.
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