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 (bidimensional 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 descriptive, 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

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).

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Changed thinking about race in 2020-2021</td>
<td>46.1%</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Average perceived discrimination</td>
<td>2.28</td>
<td>1.08</td>
<td>0.33**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Average African American behavioral orientation</td>
<td>2.77</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>0.077</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Average heritage culture behavioral orientation</td>
<td>2.51</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>-0.077</td>
<td>-0.17</td>
<td>0.32**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Average White American behavioral orientation</td>
<td>2.98</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>0.154</td>
<td>0.082</td>
<td>0.091</td>
<td>0.029</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: M, 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)

References & Acknowledgements

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