



Everyday discrimination, negative emotions, and academic achievement in Filipino secondary school students: Cross-sectional and cross-lagged panel investigations

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ABSTRACT

Different forms of overt discrimination have been consistently linked to maladaptive psychological, physical health, and educational outcomes. However, limited research has been carried out to assess the link of subtle forms of discrimination like everyday discrimination on academic functioning in the school context. The current study addressed this research gap through examining the association of everyday discrimination with negative emotions and academic achievement among Filipino high school students. A cross-sectional study (Study 1) showed that everyday discrimination was positively associated with negative emotions and negatively linked to perceived academic achievement. Furthermore, everyday discrimination had indirect effects on academic achievement through the intermediate variable negative emotions. Then, a two-wave cross-lagged panel investigation (Study 2) demonstrated that Time 1 everyday discrimination was linked to higher Time 2 negative emotions. Reciprocal associations were also found among the constructs because Time 1 academic achievement was linked to lower levels Time 2 negative emotions and Time 2 everyday discrimination. The theoretical and practical implications of the research are elucidated.

1. Introduction

Students may commonly experience unjust treatments in the school contexts. For instance, they may feel that some of their classmates are treating them as if they are not intelligent. At times, students from low income socioeconomic background may perceive that students from high income families are more likely to get better academic support from teachers and non-academic staffs. In some cases, students belonging to ethnic minority groups may sense that they are receiving lower grades than students from dominant cultural groups. These scenarios point to how discrimination may take place in the academic settings.

Existing literature has cited different types of discrimination. Racial discrimination pertains to behaviors that characterize unjust beliefs on people from a specific racial background (Clark, Anderson, Clark, & Williams, 1999; Jones, 1997). Gender discrimination refers to unjust behaviors towards individuals with specific gender or social sexual orientations (Klonoff & Landrine, 1995). These and other forms of discrimination can result in maladaptive outcomes like poor psychological health (Hatch et al., 2016), lower levels of self-esteem (Jia, Liu, & Shi, 2017), higher levels of depression (English, Lambert, & Ialongo, 2014; Lambert, Robinson, & Ialongo, 2014), fewer sleeping hours (Sims et al., 2016; Slopen, Lewis, & Williams, 2016), increased risk of cardiovascular illnesses (Everson-Rose et al., 2015), heightened risk of suicidal ideation (Walker, Brody, Simons, Cutrona, & Gibbons, 2017), and problematic

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behaviors (Unnever, Cullen, & Barnes, 2016).

Furthermore, discrimination has detrimental effects on academic outcomes. Previous research shows that students who experience discrimination are likely to have lower academic achievement (Brown & Chu, 2012; English, Lambert, & Ialongo, 2016; Stone & Han, 2005; Wong, Eccles, & Sameroff, 2003), academic adjustment (Hughes, Del Toro, Harding, Way, & Rarick, 2016), academic aspirations (O'Hara, Gibbons, Weng, Gerrard, & Simons, 2012), academic motivation and engagement (Katz, 1999; Wong et al., 2003), academic self-concept (Chavous, Rivas-Drake, Smalls, Griffin, & Cogburn, 2008), collegiate enrolment (O'Hara et al., 2012), self-esteem (Fisher, Wallace, & Fenton, 2000), university identification (Smith, Jaurique, & Ryan, 2016), and school belongingness (Faircloth & Hamm, 2005).

Despite the growing evidence on the deleterious impact of discrimination on relevant educational outcomes, previous studies had considerable limitations. First, past investigations concentrated on the effects of overt types of discrimination (i.e., racial or ethnic and gender discrimination; Benner & Graham, 2011; Benner & Kim, 2009; Brown & Chu, 2012; English et al., 2016; Mendoza-Denton, Downey, Purdie, Davis, & Pietrzak, 2002; Wong et al., 2003) rather than subtle forms of discrimination (i.e., everyday discrimination) on relevant indices of academic functioning. Second, few studies have examined the social (Benner & Graham, 2011), motivational (Eccles, Wong, & Peck, 2006), and affective (English et al., 2016) mechanisms that may explain why certain forms of discrimination may be related to different academic outcomes. Furthermore, these investigations focused on exploring what factors would mediate the hypothesized impact of overt forms of discrimination on academic functioning. This emphasizes the need to identify psychological mechanisms which can elucidate the association of subtle types of discrimination on educational outcomes.

Hence, the current research combined cross-sectional (Study 1) and longitudinal (Study 2) studies to explore how a subtle form of discrimination – everyday discrimination, may be linked to academic achievement among Filipino high school students. It also assessed the mediating effects of negative emotions on the association between everyday discrimination and achievement.

1.1. Consequences of discrimination

The majority of previous investigations conceptualized discrimination as the undesirable attitude and behaviors towards others who belong to a particular group (Aboud & Amato, 2001) which can be manifested in various forms like negative attitude towards members of lesbian and gay communities (gender discrimination), undesirable views towards people belonging to ethnic minority groups (ethnic discrimination), and unfavorable approach towards Black Africans (racial discrimination). The existing literature has demonstrated that these overt forms of discrimination (i.e., gender and racial discrimination) can lead to undesirable psychological, health, and academic outcomes (English et al., 2014; Hatch et al., 2016; Lambert et al., 2014).

Whereas previous literature focused on examining the detrimental impacts of racial, ethnic, and other overt forms of discrimination, recent studies have concentrated on exploring the effects of subtle types of discrimination including everyday discrimination (Krieger, Smith, Naishadham, Harman, & Barbeau, 2005; Stucky et al., 2011; Sue, 2010a, 2010b; Williams, Yu, Jackson, & Anderson, 1997). As it is likely that everyday discrimination can happen more frequently than overt forms of discrimination such as racial and gender discrimination, existing studies have recognized the importance of assessing these daily and mild doses of discrimination (Gonzales et al., 2016; Panter, Daye, Allen, Wightman, & Deo, 2008; Stucky et al., 2011). However, limited research has been carried out to explore the potential downside of subtle forms of discrimination (i.e., everyday discrimination) especially in the academic context.

Williams et al. (1997) have conceptualized everyday discrimination as the subjective perceptions of injustices that individuals encounter on a day-to-day basis. Concrete manifestations of everyday discrimination may include but are not limited to being treated with low extent of courtesy, obtaining inadequate service than others in a store, being treated as a dishonest person, and being insulted in various ways. Everyday discrimination has been associated with higher levels of maladaptive mental health outcomes (Gonzales et al., 2016; Williams et al., 1997), lifetime alcohol dependence (Molina, Jackson, & Rivera-Olmedo, 2016), anxiety among African American (Banks, Kohn-Wood, & Spencer, 2006), feelings of anger, hostility, and stress in American Indians and Alaska natives (Gonzales et al., 2016), weight during pregnancy in Black and Latina (Reid et al., 2016), accumulation of body fats in African-American and Caucasian middle-aged women (Lewis, Kravitz, Janssen, & Powell, 2011), elevated cortisol levels which is indicative of higher stress (Huynh, Guan, Almeida, McCreath, & Fuligni, 2016), chronic physical health conditions among Latinos and American adults (Earnshaw et al., 2016; Molina & Simon, 2014), psychological distress (Janevic et al., 2015; Molina, Little, & Rosal, 2016), depression (Ikram et al., 2016), sleep problems among multiethnic sample of middle-aged women (Lewis et al., 2013), and smoking behaviors in Romanian women (Janevic et al., 2015). Everyday discrimination is also linked to lower subjective well-being and flourishing (Datu & Mateo, 2017), self-esteem (Fisher et al., 2000), and poorer mental health (Williams et al., 1997).

A growing body of studies has also explored the consequences of discrimination on academic outcomes. Discrimination has been linked to lower levels of academic persistence and curiosity (Neblett, Philip, Cogburn, & Sellers, 2006), academic motivation (Perreira, Fuligni, & Potochnick, 2010; Wong et al., 2003), engagement (Seol, Yoo, Lee, Park, & Kyeong, 2016; Smith et al., 2016), and academic achievement (Benner & Graham, 2011; Benner & Kim, 2009; Eccles et al., 2006; English et al., 2016; Mendoza-Denton et al., 2002; Neblett et al., 2006; Yoo & Castro, 2011). Yet, limited research has been done to examine the association of discrimination with academic outcomes through longitudinal research designs (e.g., Benner & Kim, 2009). These studies focused on how overt forms of discrimination (e.g., racial discrimination) were linked to academic functioning.

Furthermore, the extant literature has pointed out specific mechanisms as to why discrimination may affect educational and well-being outcomes. For example, Benner and Graham (2011) have demonstrated that the effects of discrimination on academic achievement and absences were mediated by perceived school climate. Eccles et al. (2006) also have shown that valuing school mediated the association between discrimination and academic performance. Discrimination negatively predicted physical health

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