

Latina/o College Student Discrimination: Examining Coping as Moderators



In Relation to Alcohol Use

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Introduction

BACKGROUND

- Research has revealed that Latina/o students engage in relatively greater alcohol use, in comparison to students of other ethnic groups such as non-Latina/o White, Asian, and African American.¹
- A national survey by SAMHSA found that 24.1% of Latina/o emerging adults engage in binge-drinking.²
- It is estimated that 1 in 5 Latina/os, over the age of 18, have an alcohol use disorder.³
- Alcohol use has major implications for the public health systems. In fact, a study by TRICARE (Military Health System) has revealed that approximately \$425 million in expenditures are tied to high alcohol use.⁴

DISCRIMINATION

- Discrimination occurs when an individual is treated differently due to their perceived membership in a social group. Discriminatory behaviors can include negative feelings, attitudes and stereotyping.⁵⁻⁷
- Ethnic minority groups, including Latina/os, are typically the targets of discriminatory experiences.⁸⁻⁹
- High rates of alcohol use among Latina/o college students have been found to be linked to perceived discrimination.¹⁰

COPING AS A MODERATOR

- Coping is deliberate, conscious efforts to endure stressful situations.¹¹
- Engaged coping is defined as active attempts to manage stress through processes such as problem-solving, social support, and emotional expression. Disengaged coping is defined as removing oneself from the situation and trying to get away from the stress through problem avoidance, self-criticism, and social withdrawal.¹²
- Cultural forms of coping, specific to Latina/os, include *familismo*, *religiosidad*, *fatalismo*, and ethnic group identification. *Familismo* is a value that places importance on connectedness and loyalty to family. *Religiosidad* is coping that is centralized around religious affiliation and practice. *Fatalismo* is the belief that one has no power over what happens in their life. Ethnic identity is the meaning of one's group membership and its relation to the emotional importance on an individual's self-concept.¹³⁻¹⁶

GAPS IN LITERATURE

- Dearth of literature on discrimination and alcohol use amongst Latina/o emerging adults
- Limited literature exists examining the effect of specific cultural coping strategies on alcohol use amongst Latina/os.

Purpose

- Establish a relationship between discrimination and risky alcohol use.
- Examine the potential protective or risky roles of various coping strategies on the discrimination-risky alcohol use relationship.

Hypotheses

- H₁:** Higher reports of discriminatory experiences will be related to increased alcohol use.
- H₂:** Higher reports of disengaged forms of coping will put one at risk for stronger associations in the relationship between discrimination and alcohol use.
- H₃:** Higher reports of engaged forms of coping will be protective in the relationship between discrimination and alcohol use.
- H₄:** Higher coping through family (*familismo coping*), religion (*religiosidad coping*), and ethnic identification will be protective in the relationship between discrimination and alcohol use.
- H₅:** Higher reports of coping through fatalistic self-talk (*fatalismo coping*) will put one at risk for stronger associations in the relationship between discrimination and alcohol use.

Methods

PARTICIPANTS

- n:** 796 Mexican descent emerging adults
- Ages:** 18-25 (*M* = 19.45; *SD* = 1.63)
- Gender:** 66.3% women; 33.7% men

INSTRUMENTS

- Frequency of Exposure subscale** (from Perceived Racism Scale for Latina/os; $\alpha = .97$)¹⁷
Sample items: "Because I am Latina/o, I have been passed up for promotions and benefits at work", "Some people who are not Latina/os assume I gained admission to school only because of my ethnic background"
- Responses to Stress Questionnaire (RSQ;** $\alpha = .86-.88$)¹⁸
Sample items: "I try not to feel anything", "I go with the flow"
- The Coping Inventory** (Hovey, unpublished; $\alpha = .87-.92$)
Sample items: "I did nothing because the outcome will be determined by fate", "My cultural values helped me deal with the problem"
- Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test scale (AUDIT;** $\alpha = .89$)¹⁹
Sample items: "How often do you have a drink containing alcohol?", "How often during the last year have you found that you were not able to strop drinking once you started?"

Methods Cont'd

PROCEDURE

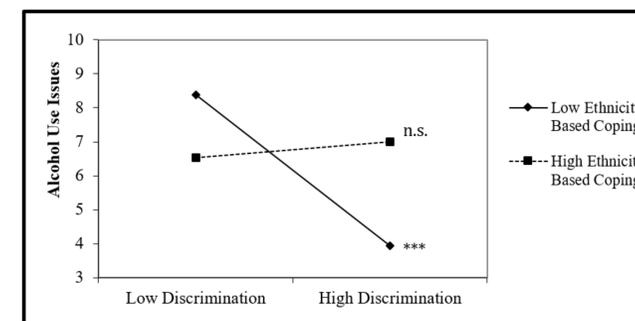
- Data collected from undergraduate introductory psychology course pool through SONA system
- Participants awarded course credit

Results

DISCRIMINATION AND COPING ON OVERALL ALCOHOL USE

Variable	B	95% CI		SE B	β	R ²	ΔR^2
		Lower	Upper				
Alcohol Overall							
Step 1						.00	.00
Discrimination	-.01	-.68	.65	.34	-.00		
Step 2						.03	.03**
Discrimination	-.23	-.97	.51	.38	-.02		
Disengage Coping	.25	-.87	1.37	.57	.03		
PC Engage Coping	-1.04*	-1.95	-.13	.46	-.12		
SC Engage Coping	-.66	-1.67	.35	.52	-.07		
Fatalism Coping	1.09*	.26	1.91	.42	.12		
Religious Coping	-.38	-.97	.22	.30	-.05		
Familismo Coping	.34	-.44	1.13	.40	.04		
Ethnicity Based Coping	.44	-.35	1.24	.41	.05		
Step 3						.11	.08***
Discrimination	-1.47***	-2.26	-.67	.40	-.15		
Disengage Coping	.44	-.65	1.53	.56	.05		
PC Engage Coping	-1.08*	-1.96	-.20	.45	-.12		
SC Engage Coping	-.49	-1.47	.49	.50	-.06		
Fatalism Coping	.94*	.13	1.74	.41	.10		
Religious Coping	-.52	-1.10	.06	.29	-.07		
Familismo Coping	.54	-.22	1.31	.39	.07		
Ethnicity Based Coping	.39	-.39	1.17	.40	.05		
Disc. x Disengage Coping	.36	-1.55	2.27	.97	.03		
Disc. x PC Engage Coping	.20	-1.41	1.81	.82	.02		
Disc. x SC Engage Coping	.22	-1.56	2.01	.91	.02		
Disc. x Fatalism Coping	.40	-.95	1.74	.69	.04		
Disc. x Religious Coping	.44	-.59	1.47	.53	.05		
Disc. x Familismo Coping	-1.04	-2.32	.24	.65	-.10		
Disc. x Ethnicity Based Coping	2.35***	1.06	3.64	.66	.25		

DISCRIMINATION AND ETHNIC IDENTIFICATION BASED COPING ON OVERALL ALCOHOL USE



Conclusions

SUMMARY

- Discrimination was negatively related to alcohol use, such that higher levels of discrimination were tied to lower levels of alcohol use. Primary control engagement coping was associated with lower levels of alcohol use. Greater use of fatalismo was tied to greater alcohol use. There was a significant interaction effect such that greater use of ethnic identification based coping consistently placed Latina/os at greater risk of higher levels of alcohol use when experiencing discrimination.

IMPLICATIONS

- Ethnic identification coping may be a risk factor in the face of discrimination on alcohol use for Latina/os.
- Findings can be used in college counseling centers to identify poor coping strategies amongst Latina/o students to protect against negative effects of discrimination on alcohol use. Meanwhile, adaptive coping mechanisms can be used as preventative measures and taught within therapeutic settings to Latina/os facing discrimination.

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