

# Latina/o College Student Alcohol Use and Academic Performance: Cultural Coping Resiliency Against Discrimination



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## Introduction

### LATINA/O COLLEGE STUDENT ALCOHOL USE & ACADEMIC DISPARITIES

#### Alcohol Use

- Although there are differences between Latina/o subgroups, as a whole, Latina/os are more likely to abuse alcohol (Lipsky & Caetano, 2009).

#### Academic Performance

- According to the U.S Census Bureau, Latina/o adolescents have had lower graduation rates than members of other ethnic groups (2009).
- Latina/os also have lower attendance rates than members of other ethnic groups (Snyder, Tan, & Hoffman, 2006).
- Latina/os have been found to have higher grade point averages (GPA) when they are enveloped in both their host and origin cultures (Aguayo, 2011).
- It has also been noticed that the GPAs of Latina/o adolescents decline as they age (Aguayo, 2011).

### THE IMPACT OF DISCRIMINATION

- Discrimination has been linked to increased alcohol use amongst Latina/o adolescents (Gil, Wagner, & Vega, 2000).
- Poor academic performance predicts alcohol usage and substance abuse among adolescents (Lopez et al., 2008; Vaughan et al., 2011).

### RELIGION & FAMILY COPING AS POTENTIAL PROTECTIVE FACTORS

- Strong family relationships have been linked to better academic performance (Crosnoe, 2004) and the absence of parental relationships have been linked to poor academic performance (Amato & Gilbreth, 1999).
- Maternal support and parental involvement were linked to lower likelihood of underage drinking and substance abuse by Latina/o adolescents (Brown, 2010; Prado et al., 2009).
- Religiosity has been shown to be used as a coping mechanism for depression and suicidality (Eliassen, Taylor, & Lloyd, 2005; Petts, 2009).
- Family strategies have been able to lower the risk of suicidal tendencies (White, 2005).

## Purpose & Hypotheses

### PURPOSE

- Given the high prevalence of alcohol use by Latina/o college students and their academic achievement gaps, the present study seeks to determine the relationship between discrimination, alcohol use severity, and academic performance. This study will inform potential coping skills that promote resilience in Latina/o college students who experience discrimination.

### HYPOTHESES

- Higher levels of all forms of discrimination (i.e., job, academic, public, healthcare, and general) will predict higher levels of alcohol use severity and lower academic performance.
- Higher levels of family and religious coping would be protective in the relationship between discrimination, alcohol use severity, and academic performance.

## Methods

### PARTICIPANTS

- n = 165** Latina/os who attend college at a large state university in Texas
- Age:** 18-36 ( $M = 19.97$  years;  $SD = 3.08$  years)
- Gender:** 62.4% women; 37.6% men
- Level:** 53% Freshman; 24.8% Sophomore; 12.8% Junior; 9.4% Senior
- GPA:** 1.00-4.00 ( $M = 2.96$ ;  $SD = .63$ )

### INSTRUMENTS

- Racism and Discrimination Scale for Latinos** (5 subscales: Work, Public, Health, Academic, and General; Collado-Proctor, 1998)
- Coping Scale** (2 cultural coping subscales: Family Coping & Religious Coping; Hovey et al., 2014)
- Grade Point Average** (GPA; Students were asked to self report their current GPA in college)
- Alcohol Use Severity** (AUDIT; Babor et al., 2002)
- Demographics**

### PROCEDURE

- Students were recruited through undergraduate psychology student pool using SONA.
- Only students who identified as Latina/o were allowed to participate.
- Responses were recorded using Qualtrics.

## Data Analysis Plan

### HIERARCHICAL LINEAR REGRESSIONS

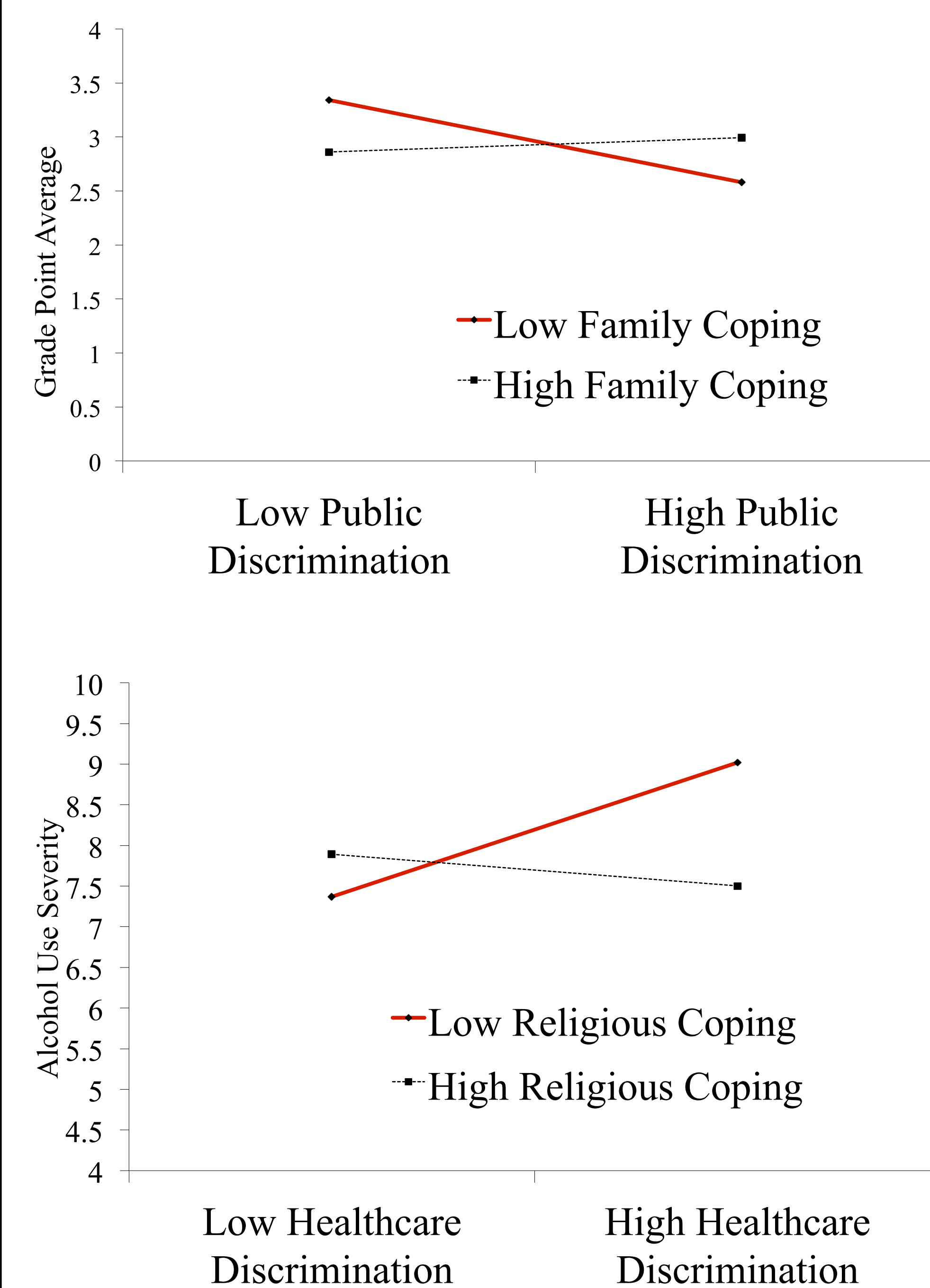
- A series of hierarchical linear regressions were conducted to determine indirect and interaction effects of each discrimination and coping variable on GPA and alcohol use severity.
  - Step 1:** Discrimination variables
  - Step 2:** Coping variables
  - Step 3:** Discrimination x Coping variables
- Interpret the regression weights if the predictor or interaction is significant to the  $p < .05$  value.

## Results

### DIRECT RELATIONSHIPS

- Higher public discrimination directly and negatively predicts academic performance (GPA).
- Higher healthcare discrimination directly and positively predicts higher alcohol use severity.

### INTERACTION EFFECTS



## Conclusions

### FAMILY COPING

- Family coping was protective when high public discrimination was present. This means that when a Latina/o college student experiences higher levels of public discrimination, there will not be a negative impact on their grade point average if they use high levels of engagement with family as a means of coping.
- The opposite was true for Latina/o college students who use low levels of family coping. When they experience public discrimination, there is a significant impact on their grade point average.

### RELIGIOUS COPING

- Religious coping was protective when high healthcare discrimination was present. This means that when a Latina/o college student experiences higher levels of discrimination in the healthcare setting, their alcohol use severity will not increase if they use high levels of religious coping.
- Low levels of religious coping actually puts Latina/o students at higher risk of higher alcohol use severity when they experience high levels of healthcare discrimination.

### IMPLICATIONS

- This study provides information about how religious and family coping can be used to protect against various forms of discrimination experienced by Latina/o college students. This can be particularly helpful in developing interventions with those who report high levels of discrimination in order to mitigate the negative impact on academic performance and alcohol use severity.

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