



Latinx College Persistence and Major Satisfaction: Examining Psychological Functioning as a Mediator in Minority Status Stress and Academic Outcomes Relationships

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Introduction

ACADEMICS OUTCOMES

- College students of Latinx background have been steadily growing in college enrollment and are expected to continue their growth into the future (Flores, 2017).
- Despite high enrollment, research has shown that there is *decreased retention* for Latinx college students. For example, 33% of White students who begin their college career at a four-year college will not earn a bachelor's degree within six years. That same figure is over 50% Latinx students (Berkner, He, & Cataldi, 2002).
- Also, injustices in the academic setting such as discrimination, stereotypes, and microaggressions may influence ethnic minority students to be less likely satisfied with their major (Wei, Ku, & Liao, 2011).

MINORITY STRESS THEORY

- One potential explanation for these poor academic outcomes is the *minority status stress* that many Latinx students may experience and the mental health effects it often engenders.
- Studies show that minority status stress is *distinctly different* from general college stress for Latinx college students (Wei et al., 2010) and is related to poorer academic outcomes (Fry, 2004).
- Higher levels of minority stress are related to a variety of poorer academic outcomes, but it is *imperative* to better understand possible mechanisms through which this occurs.

PSYCHOLOGICAL FUNCTIONING

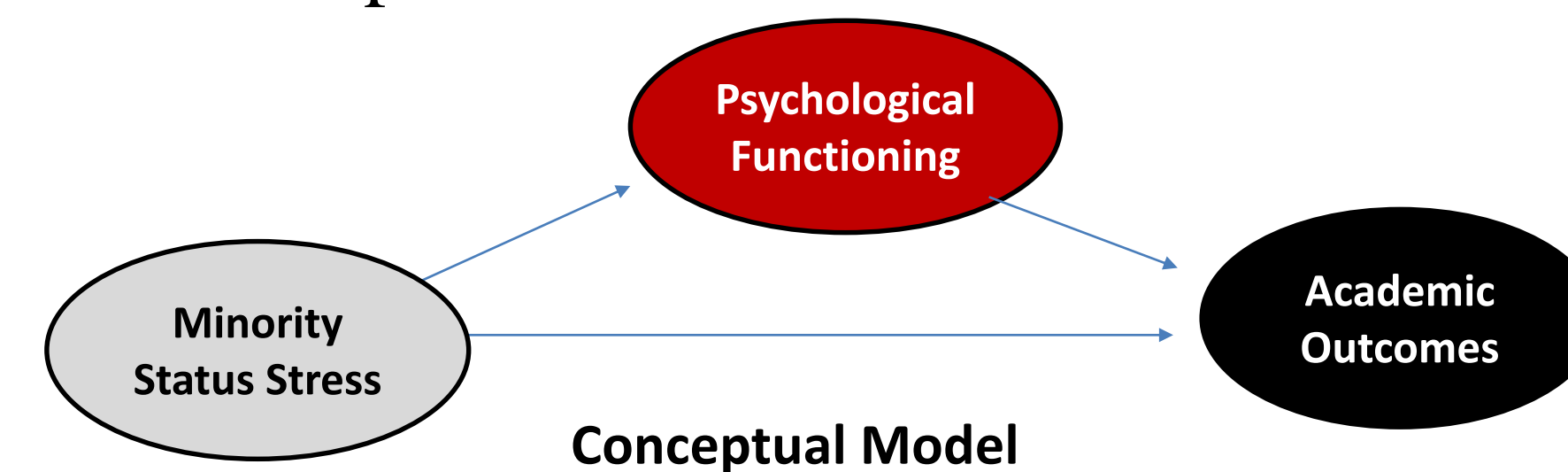
- Minority stress impacts mental health for ethnic minority college students (Cokley, McClain, Enciso, & Martinez, 2013).
- It possible that experiencing decreased psychological functioning as a result of minority stress poses a threat to the students' academic functioning.



Method

PURPOSE

The present study examines the relations between minority stress and academic outcomes, specifically college persistence and major satisfaction for Latinx college students. We also explore anxiety and quality of life as potential mediating mechanisms for these relationships.



- H₁: Higher reporting of minority stress will be associated with increased anxiety and decreased quality of life.
- H₂: Higher reporting of anxiety will be associated with decreased college persistence and decreased major satisfaction.
- H₃: Lower reporting of quality of life will be associated with decreased college persistence and decreased major satisfaction.
- H₄: Both anxiety and quality of life will mediate the relationship between minority stress and, both, college persistence and major satisfaction.

PARTICIPANTS

- 143 college students ($M = 19.24$, $SD = 1.67$; 61.3% women) all of which identified as Latinx and were collected at a university in West Texas.

MEASURES

- Minority Status Stress Scale (MSSS; Smedley et al., 1993)
- Generalized Anxiety Disorder Scale (Spitzer, 2006).
- WHO's Quality of Life scale (World Health Organization, 1998)
- Major Satisfaction Scale (Nauta, 2007)
- The College Persistence Scale (Davidson, Beck & Milligan, 2009)

PROCEDURE

- Students completed study online and received course credit through SONA at Texas Tech University.

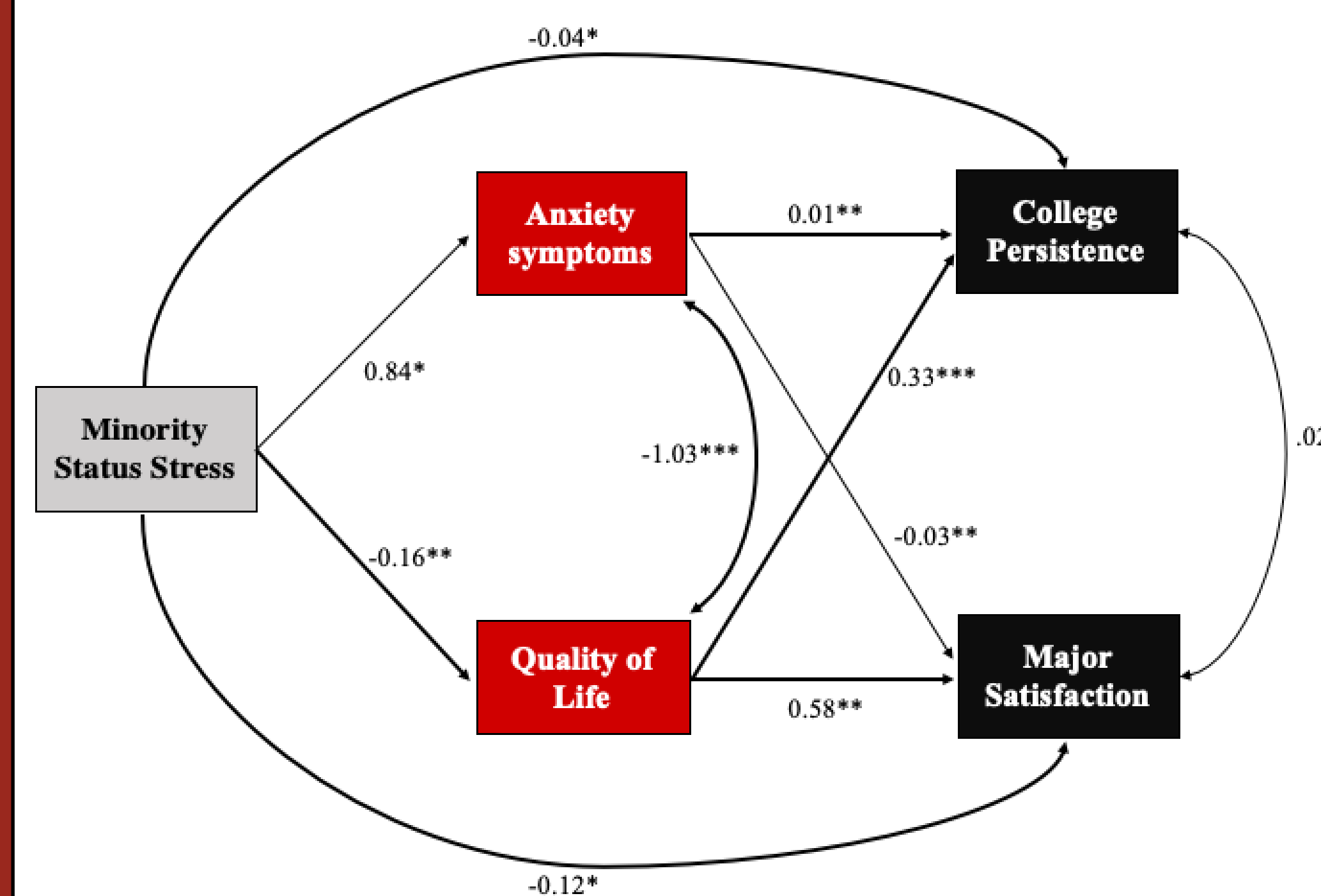
Analysis & Results

ANALYSIS

- Mplus Version 7.11 (Muthén & Muthén, 2012) was used to test the direct hypothesized relations among variables.
- Mediations were tested for various paths and after these the significant direct paths were determined in the model, indirect paths were tested through bootstrapping (Muthén & Muthén, 2012; Preacher & Hayes, 2008).

RESULTS

- Hypothesis were fully supported.
- The final model indicated that psychological functioning was a mediator between minority status stress and academic outcomes due to significant direct and indirect relationships through psychological functioning.
- In other words, anxiety and quality of life **significantly mediated** the relationship between minority stress and, both, college persistence and major satisfaction.



Standardized coefficients for hypothesized model.

- This model had acceptable fit to the data (CFI = 0.99, RMSEA = .04, 90% CI [.00, .13], $X^2 = 6.15$ (df = 3, $p = 0.105$), and SRMR = .03).
- Study underscores how minority stress, psychological functioning, and academic outcomes are all intertwined constructs for undergraduates of Latinx background.

Conclusions

- Study contributes to the existing psychological literature of Latinx students by highlighting that minority status stress is *indeed* related to academic outcomes and takes this a step further to investigate the mechanisms that may explain these relationship, namely psychological functioning.
- Recent research finds that minority status stress has been further aggravated and may be more probable due to the current sociopolitical climate which has enabled certain behaviors against marginalized minority communities (Gonzalez, Ramirez, & Galupo, 2018).
- Thus, it is important to understand how minority stress may *unexpectedly impede* ethnic minority college students' functioning on both psychological and academic levels.

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