Abstract

THE RACIAL POSITION MODEL AS A FRAMEWORK TO UNDERSTAND FRIENDSHIP FORMATION BETWEEN LATINX AMERICANS AND OTHER RACIAL MINORITIES

by

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Three experiments utilized the Racial Position Model (Zou & Cheryan, 2017) in intraminority relations context to examine how Latinx Americans form friendships with Black Americans and Asian Americans based on their shared or separate axes of subordination on the RPM. Latinx Americans may have contrasting interaction expectations with Black Americans and Asian Americans in contexts where these RPM-based similarities and differences are made salient, as they share inferiority with Black Americans and foreignness with Asian Americans but are inferior compared to Asian Americans and foreign compared to Black Americans (Zou & Cheryan, 2017). In a preliminary study, Latinx American participants answered questions about their RPM-based similarities, RPM-based meta-perceptions, and friendship interest towards Black Americans, Asian Americans, and White Americans. Results revealed that Latinx Americans felt most similar in terms of inferiority and cultural foreignness to Black Americans, followed by Asian Americans and White Americans. Latinx Americans believed that White Americans and Asians Americans would perceive people from their racial group as inferior and believed that White Americans would perceive their racial group as culturally foreign compared to Black and Asian Americans. Latinx Americans also believed that Black Americans were most interested in befriending them and were also most interested in befriending Black Americans compared to White and Asian Americans. Study 1 utilized a between-subjects experimental
design, where Latinx Americans participants were randomly assigned to have an online interaction with either a Black American or Asian American interaction partner. This study found that Latinx Americans feel more similar in terms of inferiority with Black Americans compared to Asian Americans, but there were no differences in how similar Latinx Americans feel in terms of cultural foreignness with Black and Asian Americans. Latinx American participants were also comfortable discussing an inferiority-based topic with Black Americans compared to Asian Americans. Study 2 utilized a 2 (interaction partner race: African American vs. Asian American) x 3 (interaction topic: inferiority vs. foreignness vs. control) between-subjects design, where African Americans participants were randomly assigned to have an inferiority-based, foreignness-based, or RPM-unrelated discussion with either a Black American or Asian American interaction partner. This study found that Latinx Americans feel more similar in terms of inferiority with a Black American partner compared to an Asian American partner, regardless of discussion topic. Latinx American participants also believed an Asian American partner would perceive them as inferior compared to a Black American partner, regardless of discussion topic. A series of serial mediations showed that inferiority-based similarity and inferiority-based meta-perceptions mediate the relationship between interaction partner race and target friendship interest, and inferiority-based similarity mediates the relationship between interaction partner race and participant friendship interest. These findings suggest that the specific shared experiences with discrimination between racial minorities might influence the intergroup and interpersonal attitudes and expectations minorities have with one another, contributing to a more nuanced understanding of the stigma-based identities that minorities possess, and its influence on the identity-based group processes and intergroup relations across these minority groups.