



# Racial Disparities in College Students' Scholastic Adjustment Amidst COVID-19: The Protective Function of Campus Resources and Supports

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## Introduction

- COVID-19 has disproportionately affected communities of color (e.g., Price-Haywood, 2020) because of differences in healthcare access and quality, underlying comorbidities, and living and work conditions (Hooper et al., 2020).
- Less is known about how COVID has affected college students of color, specifically in terms of scholastic adjustment.
- Prior to the pandemic, minority college students were less likely to report a sense of belonging at compared to White peers (Gopalan & Brady, 2016), in part because of their experiences with discrimination.
- During the pandemic, experiences of discrimination and xenophobia have increased for some minority students (Hooper et al., 2020). Because discrimination is negatively linked to academic outcomes (Dotterer & Lowe, 2015); racial minority students may be susceptible to academic difficulties during COVID.
- There may be relational and academic supports that confer a protective effect. Relational supports, such as high quality relationships, often contribute to feelings of belonging (Peltier et al, 2000) and, in turn, students' academic engagement and success (Umbach & Wawrzynski, 2005; Zanden et al., 2018).
- Other resources, such as academic advising, may provide support that has the potential to compensate for COVID impact (Robbins et al., 2009).

**Research Question 1:** Are there differences in COVID-19 impact and academic performance among students who identify as BIPOC versus White?

**Research Question 2:** Are there differences in satisfaction with campus relational supports and academic resources during the COVID-19 pandemic for BIPOC compared to White students?

**Research Question 3:** Are there racial differences in associations between campus relational supports and academic resources and academic performance during COVID-19?

## Methods

### Participants

- $N = 523$  college students (53% female) recruited from two, residential liberal arts institutions in the southeastern United States for a longitudinal study about interpersonal relationships, psychological well-being, and scholastic adjustment in the context of COVID-19.
- First year (25.5%), second year (39.7%), third year (13.4%), fourth year (19.3%), and fifth year and above (2.1%) students
- 49.2% White, 22% Asian, 11% Multicultural, 7.9% Black or African-American, 7.5% Hispanic or Latinx, and 2.3% other
- 70.1% of students lived on campus, 21.2% lived at home, and 8.8% resided off campus but not at home

### Procedure

- Full-time students who were at least 18-years-old were eligible to participate.
- Participants who provided consent completed a 30-minute, web-based survey in November 2020 in a location of their choice.
- Participants received a \$15 gift card upon completion of their survey.

## Results

**Research Question 1:** Are there differences in COVID-19 impact and academic performance among students who identify as BIPOC versus White?

- BIPOC students reported significantly ( $p < .05$ ) higher levels of COVID-19 impact compared to White students
- BIPOC students reported significantly ( $p < .05$ ) lower levels of academic performance compared to White students

Racial Status	<i>n</i>	Covid Impact			<i>n</i>	Academic Performance	
		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>		<i>SD</i>	
White	257	<b>3.3570</b>	.56845	254	<b>4.0131</b>	.75490	
BIPOC	265	<b>3.5167</b>	.61319	264	<b>3.8131</b>	.83315	

**Research Question 2:** Are there differences in satisfaction with campus relational supports and academic resources during the COVID-19 pandemic for BIPOC compared to White students?

- White students reported significantly higher quality relationships with faculty compared to BIPOC students.
- Mean levels of satisfaction with CAPS, Academic Advising, and Academic Skills did not differ for White and BIPOC students.

Race	Quality of Student Faculty/Relationship						Satisfaction with CAPS					
	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
White	254	<b>5.07</b>	1.31	2.86	514	<b>.004</b>	254	3.04	1.22	.90	517	.371
BIPOC	262	<b>4.71</b>	1.55				265	2.94	1.31			

Race	Satisfaction with Academic Advising						Satisfaction with Academic Skills					
	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
White	254	3.35	1.13	-.60	517	.55	254	3.23	1.16	-.09	517	.93
BIPOC	265	3.42	1.18				265	3.24	1.17			

## Results (continued)

**Research Question 3:** Are there racial differences in associations between relational supports and academic resources and academic performance during COVID-19?

BIPOC status predicted perceived academic performance such that identifying as BIPOC was associated with lower perceived performance.

For all students, regardless of race:

- higher levels of satisfaction with CAPS predicted higher perceived academic performance.
- higher quality of relationship with faculty predicted higher levels of perceived academic performance
- higher levels of satisfaction with academic skills predicted higher levels of perceived academic performance.

Satisfaction with Academic Advising:

- There was a significant interaction between Academic advising satisfaction and BIPOC status such that for White, but not BIPOC students, higher satisfaction with academic advising was associated with higher levels of perceived performance.

Summary of Regression Analyses for Campus Resources and BIPOC Status Predicting Perceived Academic Performance

Model	B	SE	F	Adj. R <sup>2</sup>
Satisfaction with CAPS			5.180**	.024
CAPS	.108**	.041		
BIPOC	-.208**	.070		
Quality of Relationship with Faculty			8.069***	.040
Quality of Relationship	.100**	.038		
BIPOC	-.156*	.070		
Satisfaction with Academic Advising			8.461***	.042
Advising	.177***	.044		
BIPOC	-.205**	.069		
Advising x BIPOC	-.206**	.060		
Satisfaction with Academic Skills			6.564***	.031
Skills	.127**	.043		
BIPOC	-.206**	.070		

Notes: B represent unstandardized coefficients. CAPS = Counseling and Psychological Services. BIPOC = Black, Indigenous, and People of Color. \* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ . \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

## Possible Evidence-Based Recommendations

- Academic advising satisfaction appears to be related to higher levels of perceived performance; therefore, **aim to increase BIPOC student interactions and comfort with academic advising** by expanding personnel in academic advising to better reflect the BIPOC student population.
- Identifying as BIPOC was associated with lower perceptions of academic performance compared to White students; therefore, **increase awareness of the academic stereotypes that may adversely affect BIPOC communities** and interfere with access to academic opportunities and/or achievement.
- White students reported significantly higher quality relationships with faculty compared to BIPOC students; therefore, **create an environment in which high-quality student-faculty relationships are valued and rewarded**.
- BIPOC students reported significantly higher COVID-19 impact compared to White students; therefore, **create a space that addresses the specific academic needs of BIPOC students** during the COVID-19 pandemic and its aftermath.

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- **COVID-19 has disproportionately impacted communities of color**
- College students from these communities may be especially susceptible to discrimination and lack of belonging and in turn academic difficulties
- Campus resources may provide a protective effect

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- **Campus resources may provide a protective effect**

# Research Questions

Are there **racial differences** (BIPOC vs White) in...

1. COVID-19 impact and academic performance?
2. Satisfaction with campus relational supports and academic resources during the COVID-19 pandemic?
3. Associations between campus relational supports/academic resources and academic performance during COVID-19?

# Methods: Participants

- A total of 523 college students recruited from two **residential liberal arts institutions** in the southeastern United States
- Gender: 53% female
- Race Identifications:
  - **White** =49.2%
  - **BIPOC**:
    - Asian=22%
    - Multicultural=11%
    - Black or African-American=7.9%
    - Hispanic or Latinx=7.5%
    - Other=2.3%

# Methods: Procedure

- Participants who provided consent completed a **30-minute, web-based survey** in November 2020

# Measures Used in the Survey

- **Covid Impact** | Adapted Experiences Related to COVID-19 (Skinner & Lansford, 2020)
  - Mean score of 16 items
    - E.g., Extent to which COVID has affected your day-to-day life. (1=Made it a lot better; 5=Made it a lot worse)
- **Perceived Academic Performance** | Student Course Engagement Questionnaire (Handelsman et al., 2005)
  - Mean score of 3 items
    - E.g., Getting a good grade, doing well on tests (1= not at all characteristic for me; 5= very characteristic for me)
- **Quality of Student Faculty Relationship** | National Survey of Student Engagement (Carini et al., 2006)
  - Mean score of single item
    - E.g., Quality of your interactions with faculty during the past month. (1= poor; 7 = excellent)
- **Campus Sources and Supports:** Satisfaction with Academic Advising, Satisfaction with Academic Skills Center, Satisfaction with CAPS
  - Single item (1= Note at all, 5 = A lot)



# Results: COVID-19 Impact on Academic Performance

Research Question 1: *Are there differences in COVID-19 impact and academic performance among students who identify as BIPOC versus White?*

Findings: *BIPOC students reported significantly ( $p < .05$ ) higher levels of COVID-19 impact compared to White students*

*AND*

*BIPOC students reported significantly ( $p < .05$ ) lower levels of academic performance compared to White students*

Racial Status	Covid Impact			Academic Performance		
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# Results: Race Differences in Satisfaction with Campus Supports and Resources

**Research Question 2: Are there differences in satisfaction with campus relational supports and academic resources during the COVID-19 pandemic for BIPOC compared to White students?**

**Findings: *White students reported significantly higher quality relationships with faculty compared to BIPOC students AND Mean levels of satisfaction with CAPS, Academic Advising, and Academic Skills did not differ for White and BIPOC students.***

Race	<u>Quality of Student Faculty/Relationship</u>						<u>Satisfaction with CAPS</u>					
	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
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Race	<u>Satisfaction with Academic Advising</u>						<u>Satisfaction with Academic Skills</u>					
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# Results: Campus Sources and BIPOC Status Predicting Academic Performance

**Research Question 3: Are there racial differences in associations between relational supports and academic resources and academic performance during COVID-19?**

**Finding: BIPOC status predicted perceived academic performance such that identifying as BIPOC was associated with lower perceived academic performance.**

Summary of Regression Analyses for Campus Resources and BIPOC Status Predicting Perceived Academic Performance

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Quality of Relationship	.100**	.038	Higher quality of relationships with faculty predicted higher perceived academic performance
BIPOC	-.156*	.070	
Satisfaction with Academic Advising			
Advising	.177***	.044	There was a <b>significant interaction between satisfaction with academic advising and BIPOC status</b> , such that for White students, higher satisfaction with academic advising was associated with higher levels of performance
BIPOC	-.205**	.069	
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Satisfaction with Academic Skills			
Skills	.127**	.043	Higher levels of satisfaction with academic skills predicted higher perceived academic performance
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# Summary of Findings

- There is some evidence to suggest that college students of color are disproportionately affected by the pandemic
  - Overall Impact
  - Academic Impact
  - Student-Faculty Interaction
  - Association between academic advising and perceived performance

# Evidenced-Based Recommendations

1. **Create a space that addresses the specific academic needs of BIPOC students** during the COVID-19 pandemic and its aftermath.
2. **Aim to increase BIPOC student interactions and comfort with academic advising** by expanding personnel in academic advising to better reflect the BIPOC student population.
3. **Create an environment in which high-quality student-faculty relationships are valued and rewarded.**
4. **Increase awareness of the academic stereotypes that may adversely affect BIPOC communities** and interfere with access to academic opportunities and/or achievement.