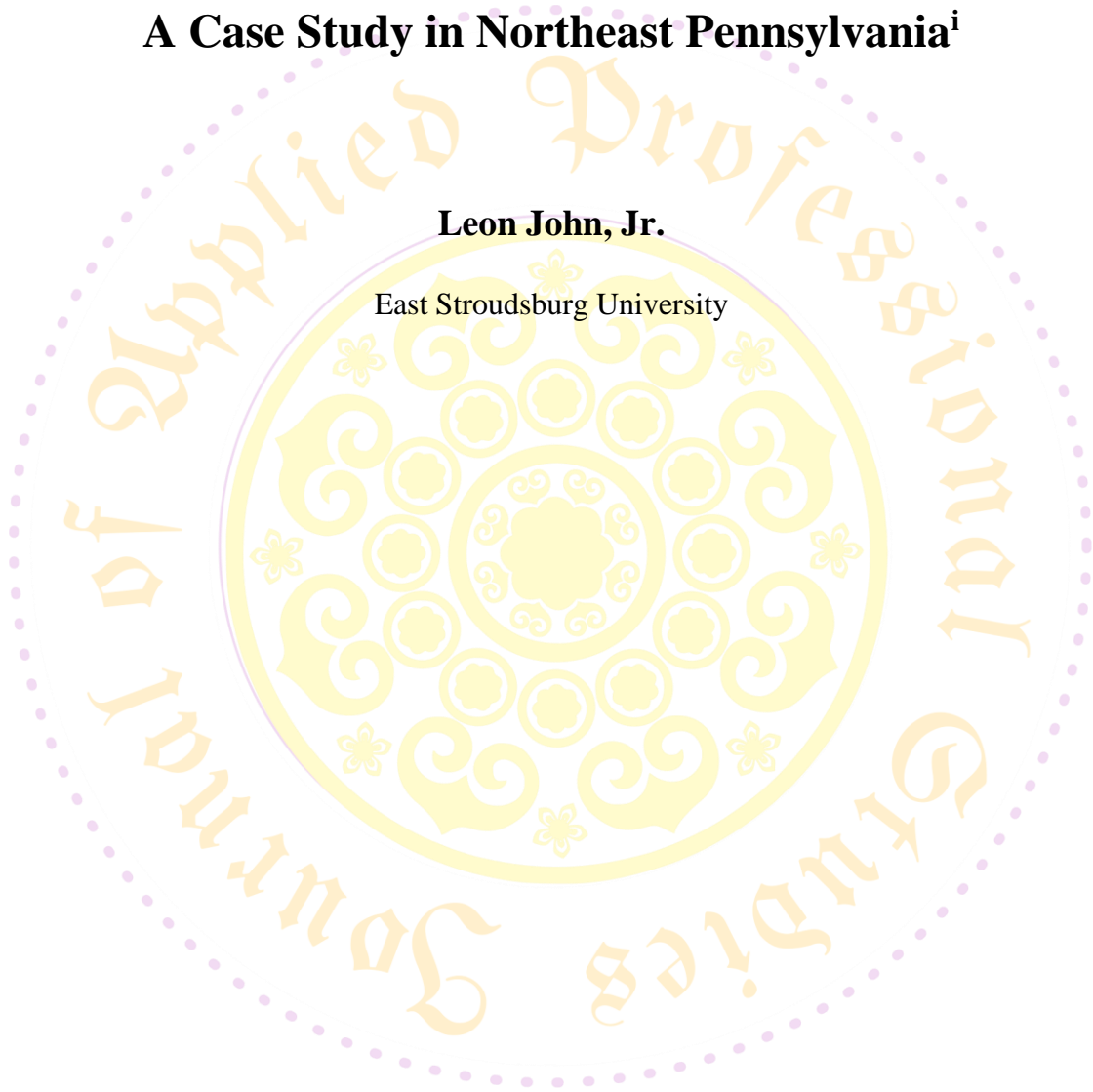


Self-Confidence Among Students of Color in Higher Education

A Case Study in Northeast Pennsylvaniaⁱ

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Abstract

This study measured self-efficacy (DV) as it related to academic achievement, personal identity, campus climate and campus resources (IVs) among 1,156 students of color (SOC) at three predominantly white institutions of education (PWI) in Northeastern Pennsylvania (NEPA). Social Identity Theory was used as the conceptual framework to examine the predictors of self-efficacy. The Student Satisfactory Inventory (SSI) administered by Noel Levitz was used as the instrumentation to gather responses of SOC and assess their self-efficacy. Responses to the question of overall satisfaction on the SSI were used to measure self-efficacy. The results yielded significant correlations among academic achievement, personal identity, campus climate and campus resources as it related to self-efficacy among SOC. Multiple questions were analyzed that related to each of the independent variables. Supplemental analyses were used to test the reliability and validity of the relationship of each question as it related to each of the IVs. Analysis showed that each of the IVs were important for SOC to have a positive relationship with the PWI they were enrolled. In an effort to recruit and retain SOC, and ensure their success, PWI need to closely examine the data from SOC from surveys like the SSI.

Keywords: Self-Efficacy; higher education; northeastern Pennsylvania; predominantly white institutions; social identity; students of color.

Introduction

Colleges and universities nationwide are becoming more diverse ethnically and culturally but are not making any changes to accommodate the influx of different cultures to their campuses (Harwood, Hunt, Mendenhall, and Lewis, 2012). In research conducted by Stacy A. Harwood and others, students of color (SOC) face both subtle and outward forms of racism at predominantly white institutions of higher education (PWI). Even though SOC benefitted from their experiences at an institution of higher education, they were treated differently by their white peers, staff, and administration of PWI. Some felt that there was no one from the staff or administration to whom they could depend on for support (Harwood et al., 2012). SOC who were involved with campus life cited experiences that ranged from jokes that were racially motivated, to racial slurs from their peers and from others who worked on campus. PWI should employ more faculty and staff to whom SOC can relate, and to whom they can lean on for support (Harwood, et al 2012), if they intend to increase their number of SOC as a means to diversify the student body. PWI enroll diverse student populations but have not done much to change or enhance the culture by offering student support for SOC. As a result, SOC do not feel that the institutions make an integrated effort to change the overall culture on campus that would make them feel welcome, and it deters them from being successful academically and acclimating to the campus (Harwood et al., 2012).

According to research conducted by Anjale Welton and Melissa Martinez in 2014, SOC who are prepared to enroll at PWI are ready for a rigorous academic challenge and recognize that smaller to mid-size PWI will provide them with easier access and interaction with faculty and administration and support services. However once enrolled at the PWI, SOC felt that they did not belong. One reason was due to the SOC's belief of social identity and how it relates to them as

people (Hurtado, Alvarado, Guillermo-Wann, 2015). As much as they were prepared for the academic rigors, if SOC felt that they did not belong, it led to problems such as failure to fit in, bad academic standing, and decreased interest in continuing their educational experience (Hurtado et al., 2015). Campus expectations among SOC not being met include support services that relate directly to them, availability of co-curricular activities, and personal attention from faculty. Their feelings of self-efficacy were challenged, and made them feel as though they are not part of the larger campus community because of their personal categorization of being a minority (Welton & Martinez, 2014).

A lack of self-efficacy becomes the root of the problem for SOC. This can result in SOC unsuccessfully achieving their academic goals. Without the support services and opportunities that they need, SOC encounter issues and problems in the campus environment that are compounded by the rigors of academic achievement (Welton & Martinez, 2014). Self-efficacy is directly related to overall satisfaction among college students (DeWitz & Walsh, 2002).

Social Identity Theory

According to Tajfel and Turner (1979), social identity theory is defined as one population's feeling of self-belonging to a certain group because of their own background. These individuals choose to identify with a group because of shared interests, affiliations, gender, age or race. This allows individuals to define who they are and what group they belong to in society. It also helps individuals to define others by recognizing them as belonging to the same group as they do, or belonging to a different group altogether. By placing themselves in one group, they can systemically view others as belonging to other groups (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). This theory can be applied to SOC and their feelings about belonging while enrolled at PWI in Northeastern Pennsylvania. Social identity theory can be applied to how SOC feel that they belong to the same cultural group as other SOC.

Regardless of differences in academics, socioeconomics, and personal interests, Ashforth & Mael (1989) suggested social identity theory forces SOC to place themselves in a group with each other because of their physical similarities; that is, they are not white while the majority of their peers, staff, and administration are white. Based on how SOC perceived how the campus community views them, as well as their feelings of self-efficacy, they viewed themselves as being a part of an in-group or out-group.

Perceptions of the racial climate on campus are due to how SOC feel they are being viewed by the campus administration and their white peers, as well as the availability of social spaces and interactions they experience on campus (Lowe, Byron, Mennicke, 2014). They stated that classroom interaction with faculty leads to microaggressions that set them apart from their white peers (Lowe et al., 2014). Faculty expect SOC to speak to their personal experiences in class and assume SOC will inject diversity into the curriculum. This sets SOC apart from their white counterparts and contributes to their feelings of being part of a separate group.

Tajfel and Turner (1979) also state that everyone places a label on groups to help cognitively identify who they are. For example, the labels of "hipsters" and "geeks" are distinctions given to groups. When these labels are mentioned, an immediate reaction or physical characterization is

formulated in one's brain. SOC do not feel that they belong to the larger community, and may feel negatively toward their social group status. As a result, they formulate the presumption that they are the out-group. In their study S. Rankin and R. Reason (2005), state that SOC are more likely to be harassed, to be discriminated against, and to feel that they do not have a peaceful learning environment as compared to their white peers at PWI, and are victims of racial microaggressions.

Rationale and Significance of Study

Student satisfaction surveys are conducted at institutions of higher education to address the way that students feel on college campuses (Senior, Moores and Burgess, 2017). Institutions of higher education have moved towards the consumer model which suggests that incoming freshmen have an expectation of resources and facilities in addition to the education that they will receive from that institution of higher education (Senior et al., 2017).

Review of the Literature

Many PWI are increasing their enrollment of SOC through increased outreach to diverse populations while some are not. This is as the nation's population is becoming more diverse (Hurtado et al., 2015; Garces, Liliana, and Cogburn, 2015). SOC enrolled at PWI that are not increasing their efforts to diversify their campus community encounter fewer feelings of self-belonging, and feel that PWI are not providing them with the ample support they need to succeed academically and socially (Garces et al., 2015). Researchers suggest that when students enrolled at institutions of higher education regardless of their race have perceptions that administration and faculty do not respond to their needs, whether it be academic or social, that they are being treated unfairly and that they are not part of the campus community.

SOC who successfully matriculate from PWI have an easier time adapting to environments that are predominantly white (Harper & Hurtado, 2007). Their experiences at PWI that have environments that are nurturing to them through faculty/staff/administration equipped them to have a higher chance of being successful in the classroom, and also had a positive effect on the development of their cognitive, psychological, interpersonal and communication skills (Turner, Hewstone, Voci, and Vonofakou., 2008; Harper & Hurtado, 2007). The classroom is an important space for SOC who felt that they are already at a disadvantage of being singled out at PWI. Faculty who lead classes play a very important role in the academic achievement of SOC and can help or deter them from having a positive college experience (Harper & Hurtado, 2007).

SOC relate to faculty/staff/administrators who look like them (Luedeke, 2017; Museus & Saelua, 2017; Sandoval-Lucero et al., 2012). Even though this is clearly stated in literature and other research, there are still inequalities in the make-up of faculty/staff/administration of color at PWI. This acts as a roadblock to SOC who feel as though they cannot relate to the campus environment because of the lack of diversity (Hurtado et al., 2015; Turner, Myers & Creswell, 1999).

Even though faculty/staff/administrators of color admitted to not being able to provide enough support for SOC at PWI, there were positive findings in the research conducted by Gardner, Jr. et al. (2014). SOC were successful in the classroom after receiving messages of healthy self-image and motivation, encouragement to speak with family members and friends at home, and

participation in student affairs in leadership roles. Self-image is directly related to personal racial identity (Rodgers & Summers, 2008; Johnson et al. 2014; Fryer, Jr. & Torelli, 2005; Hurtado et al., 2015). SOC who have been able to have a positive outlook with their personal identity are more successful academically (Rodgers & Summers, 2008). Faculty/staff/administration of color indicated that they encouraged SOC mentees to feel confident about themselves and what they represent culturally. SOC were also encouraged to maintain contact with their family members and friends they grew up with, as well as to get involved with student affairs as suggested by faculty/staff/administrators of color in the study (Gardner, Jr. et al., 2014), persist in the classroom and maintain successful GPAs. The faculty/staff/administration of color cite that these connections that SOC have with family and other students help to establish their personal identity and motivate them to be successful and persist until graduation.

SOC personal identity is directly related to their academic success at PWI (Harwood, Huntt, Mendenhall, and Lewis, 2012). SOC attending PWI have a lower academic GPA than SOC attending Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU). This is attributed to the lack of belonging they felt with the campus climate. Their sense of identity is challenged as they feel that the reasons why they do not get to reap benefits of support from PWI is because of who they are as SOC (Rodgers & Summers, 2008). In a study conducted by Kelly Rodgers and Jessica Summers (2008), SOC indicate that when they approach faculty for help with understanding course work assignments, they leave their offices feeling more confused and helpless than they were when they arrived. SOC feel this way because they believe that faculty are not genuine or helpful to them because they are not white. This is not deliberate, as SOC attribute this to faculty not being able to relate to them (Rodgers & Summers, 2008).

SOC also felt that they cannot relate to administration as it pertains to campus life (Rodgers & Summers, 2008). SOC who try to get involved with campus life are not comfortable with the responses and support that they are given. They also feel if they attended an HBCU, or a school with more diversity, they would feel more supported and have the ability to become more involved with campus life. Rodgers & Summers (2008), use the example of Greek life as a system that makes SOC feel left out because of their identity. Greek organizations at PWI contain mostly white students. Any attempt to achieve equal treatment and standards as the members of the Greek organization will be met with challenges because they are not white (Rodgers & Summers, 2008). Another obstacle as it relates to personal identity and fitting into a campus community that SOC face is a phenomenon called “acting white.” This phenomenon is associated with students who raise their hand when a question is asked, achieve an above average GPA, and have an interest in activities that are not defined with their culture, such as band, chorus, or ballet (Fryer, Jr. & Torelli, 2009). Peers and social groups that SOC belong to are responsible for these labels placed on SOC, which causes SOC to question their personal identities as associated with attending a PWI. Whiteness, based on the “acting white” phenomenon makes SOC equate high academic achievement with being white because PWI are constructed for their white peers (Fryer, Jr. & Torelli, 2009). This comes from a feeling that SOC feel outnumbered in a classroom, as they recognize there are more white students in the classrooms being instructed by white professors. This construct leads to SOC feeling as though the education they are receiving is part of a system that does not take their cultural and ethnic differences into consideration. In addition to peer pressure from their social circles that include family and outside community friends at home, they may feel like their personal identity is lost (Fryer, Jr. & Torelli, 2005).

Microaggression as it relates to race has become one of the main reasons that SOC feel like the campus climate at PWI does not make them feel welcome (Sue et al., 2007). Racial microaggressions include a number of factors that SOC feel they experience at a PWI. They include microassaults, defined as stereotypical insults aimed at them as a population because they are different from their white peers; microinsults, defined as exchanges between two people that do not take SOC's cultural heritage into consideration; and microinvalidations, defined as interactions between two or more people that nullify SOC and their feelings about a particular subject or subjects. All of these exchanges can be among SOC and their white peers, SOC and campus administration, or SOC and faculty. It can also be a combination of all three (Sue et al., 2007). In a study conducted by Kevin L. Nadal, Y. Wong, K. Griffin, K. Davidoff, and J. Sriken (2014), racial microaggressions caused low self-esteem among SOC. A major component of these racial microaggressions occurred as part of campus life at PWI which make SOC feel distressed and had a negative effect on their academic and social standing within the campus community (Nadal et al., 2014).

SOC stated that faculty, staff, administration who do not look like them, as well as their white peers, have all at least once made them feel uncomfortable through jokes and comments (Watkins et al., 2010). They also stated that their treatment in the classroom is uncomfortable when there are discussions about topics as it relates to non-white culture. There are instances where SOC are called upon to answer questions or comment on situations that faculty feel they can relate to because they are not white (Nadal et al., 2014). SOC feel like these perceptions of them are negative and make them feel inferior to their white peers, and can lead to feelings of isolation from their white peers (Nadal et al., 2014). This all contributes to their negative feelings of the campus climate.

Interracial interaction amongst students' influences SOC feelings toward campus climate (Lowe et al., 2014). Opportunities for students of all backgrounds to have face time with each other outside of the classroom can help to alleviate the negative perception that SOC have of themselves and of the campus climate because of their cultural differences.

Perceptions of racial microaggressions were used in a study conducted by Stacy A. Harwood et al. in 2012, to discuss the experience of SOC living in residence halls at a PWI with approximately 81 SOC. The researchers chose residence halls because it is an area where the student population experienced real life conflicts but could also celebrate growth. It was a place that was a natural setting for students to speak about their campus climate opinions. Other research conducted has shown that students who lived on campus tended to have higher grades and assimilated into the campus climate more so than those who did not (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991, 2005).

When SOC are recruited to come to a PWI with the promise of programs that will support them and resources available to help them acclimate, such as offices of multicultural affairs, there are several factors the PWI need to take into consideration. One of the factors include the learning needs of SOC because they feel they have to work around their differences while enrolled at PWI (Ingram & Gonzalez-Matthews, 2013). In a study conducted by Dr. Elena Sandoval-Lucero, and others (2012), SOC were asked about what made them want to continue their academic career at the PWI where they were enrolled. They indicated that increased relationships with faculty, family support, and more campus engagement and support were among the main reasons.

Being involved with campus clubs and organizations that are focused on them as SOC, and being advised by faculty and staff that understood their culture helped with their feelings of belonging and connectedness to their classmates (Sandoval-Lucero et al., 2012).

SOC had the perception that faculty who looked like them in the classroom would make them feel more comfortable. In this particular study (Sandoval-Lucero et al., 2012), SOC indicated that they felt they were part of a family, because faculty of color who were at their PWI could relate to them. Even though some SOC were not full-time, their part-time status was not a disadvantage, and they felt they were truly embraced by the environment because their diverse faculty understood their needs as students. It motivated them to also contribute more in the classroom and be successful among their white peers (Sandoval-Lucero, et al, 2012).

Student success is mostly defined by academic achievement among students, and while students feel that they need to maintain a positive relationship with their faculty to be successful, much of their success can be attributed to mentoring (Lee, 1999; Crisp & Cruz, 2009). SOC tend to rely on mentors for more than academic support. They feel that they need a mentor for broader types of support that include emotional and psychological, and may look to a mentor as a role model (Luedke, 2017). They gravitate to staff/administration who look like them because they feel comfortable. At PWI that do not have a high number of diverse staff/administration, it becomes more difficult for SOC to find someone they can utilize as a mentor. Findings indicate that SOC who have positive relationships with mentors persist at their institution, have higher grade point averages, and become leaders on their campus (Luedke, 2017).

Research Design

This quantitative cross-sectional study is designed to answer the question, “How does Self-Efficacy among College Students of Color (SOC) Affect their Perception of Overall Satisfaction at Three Mid-Size Institutions of Higher Education that are Predominantly White Institutions (PWI) in Northeastern Pennsylvania (NEPA)?” In this study the independent variables (IVs) are academic achievement, personal identity, campus climate, and campus resources. The dependent or outcome variable (DV) is self-efficacy. This study is designed to understand how self-efficacy among SOC is defined by the SOC’s experience at a PWI as it relates to their academic achievement, personal identity, campus climate, and campus resources.

Participants

The participants in this study are all enrolled students of color (SOC) who attended three mid-size PWI in NEPA, inclusive of freshman through senior years, and who participated in the Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI) designed by Noel Levitz during the academic years 2014-2015, and 2015-2016. This study was conducted amongst SOC between the ages of 17 – 34 during the academic years that started and included January 2015 through May 2016, and SOC who would have lived on and off campus. The SOC from these particular PWI were chosen because of accessibility of the campuses for the researcher, and the profile of each PWI with regard to size as it was classified by the Carnegie Mellon Classification Index. Excluded from this study are students who were enrolled at other PWI in NEPA and students who were not classified as SOC.

Students participating in this study will be selected from 2,087 students from three PWI in NEPA who participated in the Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI) that is given to the student body to measure student satisfaction. The goal of this study is to collect data from as many SOC as possible that are enrolled at PWI in NEPA. The PWI selected are three, private institutions of higher education in the metropolitan statistical area of the Northeastern part of Pennsylvania located in Lackawanna and Luzerne counties.

Instrument

In order to capture quantitative data from SOC at PWI, data retrieved from the Student Satisfaction Inventory (SSI), Form A created by Ruffalo Noel Levitz and administered by the PWI was used. The data included race, gender, age range, and class year. The data also included general satisfaction of student services from the participating PWI. Current GPA and educational goal was also among the data that was collected; however, as this is a self-reporting instrument, there will be no way to confirm the validity of that specific data.

The SSI by Ruffalo Noel Levitz is a study administered at institutions of higher education. The SSI is administered to all students, graduate and undergraduate, and helps to measure their level of satisfaction. Freshman to sophomore retention is an issue with college campuses, and the SSI is a key tool that is used to measure student satisfaction with results that aid in student retention (Schreiner & Nelson, 2013).

Each of the PWI uses the SSI Form A which measures student expectations and level of satisfaction on several scales including: (a) academic advising effectiveness, (b) campus climate, (c) campus support services, (d) concern for the individual, (e) instructional effectiveness, (f) admissions and financial aid effectiveness, (g) registration effectiveness, (h) responsiveness to diverse populations, (i) safety and security, (j) student centeredness, and (k) campus life. The survey had 106 questions that utilized a seven-point Likert scale with 1 meaning not satisfied at all, and 7 meaning very satisfied.

Procedure

The SSI was administered at the respective PWI as part of their own requirements to measure student satisfaction and to identify areas that need improving. The SSI was administered in classrooms as part of specific classes during one class session. Even though there is no time limit that is suggested for the administration of the SSI according to each PWI, instructors are encouraged to dedicate a part of their class to the administration of the SSI. The SSI was a requirement for students who were in the class at that time. However, students were not required to answer all of the questions, but were encouraged to be honest with their responses. There were no incentives, and instructors were also encouraged to not influence their students in any way. Instructors did have an opportunity to provide ten questions that were relevant to their class that would be measured according to the Likert scale if they chose to.

As previously mentioned, a total of 2,087 students were administered the SSI not including exclusions. Outliers would be from students who did not answer the question about their race/ethnicity. These will not be included within the analysis. No open-ended responses are

expected because of the nature of the SSI which only allows answers based on the 7-point Likert scale. The SSI was administered between Fall 2015 and Winter 2016. SPSS was used to analyze and conduct research for the data.

Results/Findings

The purpose of this cross-sectional study is to measure self-efficacy among SOC at three, institutions of higher education that are predominantly white institutions (PWI) in Northeastern Pennsylvania (NEPA). Self-Efficacy (DV) was measured by the level of overall satisfaction that SOC indicated and was predicted by independent variables (IV), academic achievement (IV1), personal identity (IV2), campus climate (IV3) and campus resources (IV4).

For IV 2, 3 and 4, responses were weighted and based on a series of statements that related to each of the IV. Statements were selected by the researcher based on prior research as it related to each respective IV. Once statements were identified for each of the IV, a mean response was found for each so that a score could be calculated and be representative of each of the IV. For IV2, five statements were measured. For IV3, three statements were measured. For IV4, four statements were measured.

The participants in this study were students who identified themselves as being a SOC, i.e. students who were not white. The students attended three PWI in Northeastern Pennsylvania and were representative of all enrolled students. Participants were not younger than 18 years of age. The targeted goal of this study was to measure self-efficacy among all SOC who had participated in the SSI survey. The SSI survey was administered to all students in the classroom during a specific day and time chosen by faculty. The SSI survey was not mandatory, but all students were expected to complete it. Once administered, the SSI survey was returned to each of the three PWI Offices of Institutional Research. The collected surveys were sent to Noel Levitz that analyzed and reported the results to the respective PWI. Data that were missing demographic information were not included in this study.

Student Ethnicity Information

Information as it pertains to Ethnicity/Race is provided in Table 2. As the table illustrates the total number of SOC responses analyzed were 1,156. This is based on student responses to their ethnicity and is inclusive of both male and female. Each of the numbers represent the ethnicity/race that each student identified with:

- 1 = African American
- 2= American Indian/Alaskan Native
- 3= Asian or Pacific Islander
- 5 = Hispanic
- 6= Other

Numbers 4 and 7 represented Caucasian/White and Prefer Not to respond respectively.

Out of 1,156 SOC who were administered the SSI, some did not respond to all of the questions as it related to each of the IV's.

Sub Problem 1

Does academic achievement relate to how SOC feel about self-efficacy at PWI in NEPA? This relates to academic achievement (IV1) of SOC at PWI. In order to address this question, the response for academic achievement was calculated. The numbered statement as it appeared on the SSI was:

108. Current GPA:

- (1) No credits
- (2) 1.99 or below
- (3) 2.0 - 2.49
- (4) 2.5 - 2.99
- (5) 3.0 - 3.49
- (6) 3.5 or above

As displayed in Table 4, the mean response was 3.10 (s.d.= 1.730) indicating that SOC were reporting in the higher GPA range of 2.0 and higher (N=1,145) as it relates to the relationship between academic achievement and self-efficacy (range was 1-6).

A Pearson correlation coefficient was conducted for the relationship between SOC's self-efficacy and academic achievement. A positive correlation was found ($r=1094$)=.008. $p<.001$) indicating a significant linear relationship between the two variables. SOC relate academic achievement to higher self-efficacy.

Sub Problem 2

What are the factors that SOC feel are important to them at the PWI in Northeastern Pennsylvania (NEPA) they are enrolled? This relates to the personal identity (IV2) of SOC at PWI. In order to answer this statement, responses from the SSI survey were calculated to include a mean score for IV2. Five statements from the SSI survey were used to measure SOC's feelings of personal identity as it related to self-efficacy (DV). The statements that students responded to on the survey were measured on a Likert Scale (1-7). A mean was taken from the questions and used to measure the self-efficacy (DV) score using the Enter method. The numbered statements as it appeared on the SSI were:

- 1. Most students feel a sense of belonging here.
- 25. Faculty are fair and unbiased in their treatment of individual students.
- 37. I feel a sense of pride about my campus.
- 45. Students are made to feel welcome on campus.
- 62. There is a strong commitment to racial harmony on this campus.

Based on SOC responses (n=1,047) the mean for these responses was 5.07 (s.d. 1.492). Data were screened for missing data and outliers were examined for test assumptions.

A reliability study was conducted to test the validity, reliability, and feasibility of the statements. Cronbach's Alpha was used, and the values measured .748 which indicated that items within the scale used were measuring like concepts.

A Pearson correlation coefficient was conducted for the relationship between SOC's self-efficacy and personal identity. A strong positive correlation was found ($r(1,094)=.130, p<.001$), indicating a significant linear relationship between the two variables. Those SOC with a higher personal identity tend to have a higher self-efficacy.

Sub Problem 3

Do SOC feel a sense of belonging once enrolled at a PWI in Northeastern Pennsylvania (NEPA)? This relates to the perception of campus climate (IV3) of SOC at PWI. In order to answer this question, responses from the SSI survey were calculated to include a mean score for IV3. Three statements from the SSI survey were used to measure SOC's perception of campus climate as it related to self-efficacy (DV). The statements that students had to answer on the survey were measured on a Likert Scale (1-7). A mean was taken from the statements and used to measure the self-efficacy (DV) score using the Enter method. The numbered statements as it appeared on the SSI were:

- 45. Students are made to feel welcome on campus
- 25. Faculty are fair and unbiased in their treatment of individual students.
- 59. The faculty shows concern for students as individuals.

Based on SOC responses ($n= 1,072$) the mean for these responses was 5.2 (s.d.= 1.507). Data were screened for missing data and outliers were examined for test assumptions.

A reliability study was conducted to test the validity, reliability, and feasibility of the statements. Cronbach's Alpha was used, and the values measured .782 which indicated that items within the scale used were measuring like concepts.

A Pearson correlation coefficient was conducted for the relationship between SOC's self-efficacy and campus climate. A strong positive correlation was found ($r(1,094)=.104, p<.01$), indicating a significant linear relationship between the two variables. Those SOC that perceive a better campus climate tend to have a higher self-efficacy.

Sub Problem 4

How do SOC feel that administrators at the colleges/universities support them at their PWI in NEPA? This relates to the perception of campus resources (IV) that SOC feel are available to them at PWI. In order to answer this question, responses from the SSI survey were calculated to include a mean score for IV4. Four statements from the SSI survey were used to measure SOC's perception of campus climate as it related to self-efficacy (DV). The statements that students had to respond to on the survey were measured on a Likert Scale (1-7). A mean was taken from the questions and used to measure the self-efficacy (DV) score using the Enter method. The numbered statements as it appeared on the SSI were:

- 46. I can easily get involved with campus organizations.
- 52. The student center is a comfortable place for students to spend their time.
- 65. Faculty are available during after class and during office hours.
- 71. Channels for expressing student complaints are readily available.

Based on SOC responses (n=1,032) the mean for these responses was 5.06 (s.d. =1.503). Data was screened for missing data and outliers were examined for test assumptions.

A reliability study was conducted to test the validity, reliability, and feasibility of the statements. Cronbach's Alpha was used, and the values measured .724 which indicated that items within the scale used were measuring like concepts.

A Pearson correlation coefficient was conducted for the relationship between SOC's self-efficacy and campus resources. A strong positive correlation was found ($r(1,094)=.100, p<.01$), indicating a significant linear relationship between the two variables. Those SOC with higher perceived campus resources tend to have a higher self-efficacy.

A reliability study was conducted to test the validity, reliability, and feasibility of each of the values of IVs 1-4. Cronbach's Alpha was used, and the values measured .621 which indicated that items within the scale used were measuring like concepts. It must be noted that IV1 used a 6-point scale while IVs 2-4 used a 7-point scale. This affected the outcome of the reliability statistics, but still measured closer to the value of 1.

Conclusion

The findings suggest a positive linear correlation between SOC's sense of self-efficacy as it relates to their overall satisfaction at PWI, and their responses to academic achievement, personal identity, campus climate and campus resources. As a result, each of the null hypotheses are rejected. Correlations were stronger for IV 2 (personal identity), 3 (campus climate) and 4 (campus resources) than it was for IV1 (academic achievement). The following chapter will discuss opportunities these findings can provide, and areas for future research.

Summary of Results

For the current study, a multiple linear regression utilizing Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to predict self-efficacy by measuring overall satisfaction of SOC at three private institutions of higher education in NEPA by analyzing responses based on academic achievement, personal identity, campus climate and campus resources. The full regression model containing all IV values was statistically significant in predicting SOC's self-efficacy. All of the measured variables contained correlations that were statistically close. This indicates that all SOC feel similarly as it relates to each of the variables at their respective PWI. This shows that all of the hypotheses were supported for this study.

For each of the IV as related to the DV, the researcher used the multiple regression model, and Pearson's correlation coefficient to support each of the hypotheses. The first analysis measured SOC's self-efficacy against questions related to their belief on successful academic achievement.

The mean response was 5.07 (n=1,087) indicating that SOC were reporting in the higher GPA range of 3.0 and higher. Using Pearson's coefficient, a positive correlation was found ($r(1,094)=.08$, $p<.001$) indicating a significant linear relationship between the two variables. Those SOC with an expectation of academic achievement tend to have a higher self-efficacy. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected.

The second analysis measured SOC's self-efficacy against questions related to their belief of personal identity. The mean for these responses was 5.07 (n=1,047), and using Pearson's correlation coefficient, a strong positive correlation was found ($r(1,094)=.130$, $p<.001$), indicating a significant linear relationship between the two variables. Those SOC with a higher personal identity tend to have a higher self-efficacy. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected.

The third analysis measured SOC's self-efficacy against questions related to their belief on campus climate. The mean for these responses was 5.2 (n=1,072), and using Pearson's correlation coefficient a strong positive correlation was found ($r(1,094)=.104$, $p<.01$), indicating a significant linear relationship between the two variables. Those SOC that perceive a better campus climate tend to have a higher self-efficacy. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected.

The fourth, and final analysis measured SOC's self-efficacy against questions related to their belief on campus resources. The mean for these responses was 5.06 (n=1,032), and using Pearson's correlation coefficient a strong positive correlation was found ($r(1,094)=.100$, $p<.01$), indicating a significant linear relationship between the two variables. Those SOC with higher perceived campus resources tend to have a higher self-efficacy. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected.

Interpretation of Results

According to the study conducted by Harper and Hurtado (2007), the classroom experience is what SOC feel is key to their academic success. Even though SOC realize that this is important, they acknowledge that faculty also have the ability to make them feel uncomfortable in the classroom by singling them out because of their cultural difference. SOC also report that they are not able to relate to faculty, and cite that as a hindrance to their learning process. Among the SOC responses from the SSI conducted for this study, faculty treatment of SOC in the classroom as individuals, and SOC sense of belonging was examined.

Examining the results of the SSI against self-efficacy among SOC as it relates to academic achievement, there was a significant relationship between SOC's responses on academic achievement and their feelings of overall satisfaction as related to self-efficacy. The responses were based on questions that included feelings of belonging that SOC felt in the classroom and feelings that SOC had on faculty having an unbiased outlook on the classroom.

Previous findings for research as it relates to perceptions of personal identity, campus climate and campus resources among SOC have also been explored (Rodgers & Summers, 2008; Hurtado et al., 2015; Sue et al., 2007; Watkins et al., 2010; Sandoval-Lucero et al., 2012). In each of these studies SOC indicated that they felt like they were not a part of the campus because of the lack of cultural diversity among the faculty and administration among their respective PWI. Additionally,

in a study by Museus & Saelua (2017), SOC felt that culturally safe spaces that were available for all students were lacking at their PWI.

SOC feel like they cannot relate to faculty and administration inside and outside of the classroom, and as a result they feel unwelcome on campus (Rodgers & Summers, 2008; Sue et al., 2007). Because of this, their performance in the classroom and interactions with their white peers on campus suffer. The SSI addresses SOC feelings of bias among faculty members, SOC sense of belonging they feel on campus, and the sense of concerns for students as individuals. This helps to score their feelings of self-efficacy and overall satisfaction of the PWI in which they are enrolled.

Faculty/administration singling out of SOC in specific situations such as classroom interaction and campus social life (Watkins, et al, 2010; Sandoval-Lucero, et al, 2012) can affect their persistence and success on campus. According to the findings of Watkins, et al (2010) and Sandoval-Lucero (2012), these are two issues that SOC face at PWI. The findings of Museus & Saelua (2017) indicate that SOC feel that PWI need spaces on campus where they can be themselves and share with others who are similar to them. It can also provide an opportunity for education among the campus community.

A significant relationship was found among SOC self-efficacy and their feelings of personal identity, campus climate and campus resources. This study helps to support the hypotheses of studies conducted by Rodgers & Summers (2008), Hurtado et al., (2015), Sue et al., (2007), Watkins et al., (2010), Sandoval-Lucero et al., (2012), and Museus & Saelua (2017).

Implications

Based on the findings of this study, there is a direct correlation between SOC feeling of self-efficacy as it relates to overall campus satisfaction and academic achievement, personal identity, campus climate and campus resources at three institutions of higher education in Northeastern Pennsylvania. Each of these institutions is a PWI. As academic achievement remains a primary focus at institutions of higher education, it is the responsibility of each of the institutions to provide an environment in which all students have the opportunity to succeed. If there is any indication that students are having a difficult time, faculty and administration need to identify the problems and try their best to address them. In this study, the SSI indicates the importance of these issues for SOC. If institutions similar to the PWI examined in this study continue to recruit SOC and diversify their campus environment, the issues that this study discusses need to be realized so that SOC can display satisfaction and self-efficacy that will help them to successfully matriculate.

Academic achievement remains important to SOC at PWI. This study shows that SOC's self-efficacy is directly related to their academic achievement. SOC feel that one of the major issues that they face are faculty and administration that do not look like them, or understand their cultural differences (Harper & Hurtado, 2007). Based on the findings of this study, it is important for SOC to feel welcome on campus which would allow them to succeed academically. It can therefore be surmised that if SOC already have a negative feeling when they sit in a classroom, they will be at a disadvantage from their white peers, and it will make it harder for them to succeed.

Campus climate at PWI also contributes to how SOC feel about their self-efficacy. In relation to how SOC feel about their personal identity, campus climate relates to how SOC succeed on campus. According to Sandoval-Lucero et al. (2012), SOC have all types of experiences that make them have a negative perception of the campus climate. The experiences include macroaggressions from their peers and from faculty and administration. SOC are placed in situations where they feel like a part of an out group. SOC encounter situations where they feel as though they are being excluded from the campus community by virtue of their difference. This is especially applicable during recruitment when SOC are encouraged to join the campus community with the expectation that there are a larger number of SOC than are indicated. The promise of clubs, organizations, athletics and other aspects of campus social life will allow them to freely express their differences and be with others like them. Even though this is important to ensure SOC feelings on how the campus climate is at PWI, research has shown that this does not happen, and SOC experience negative feelings toward the PWI (Sandoval-Lucero et al., 2012). The results of this study show results of significant relationship between how SOC feel about the campus climate at PWI and overall satisfaction, and display the importance of how SOC views the importance of campus climate to high self-efficacy.

How SOC feel about the importance of campus resources and how it relates to their self-efficacy is the final part of this study. The lack of spaces at PWI that are culturally familiar, and the lack of student clubs and organizations advised by faculty/staff of color are issues that are cited in a study by Museus & Saelua (2017). According to this researcher's study, this is an issue that can be addressed immediately. If PWI develop a plan for culturally relevant spaces for all students on campus, where both SOC and their white peers have access, it can improve SOC's perception of PWI campus resources. This can be achieved with the support of educational training and information conducted by faculty/administration of color and SOC with their white peers' input. Development of student clubs and organizations that are driven by the mission of diversity can also be an allocation of the Student Affairs division.

Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

Based on the findings for this research study, there are enough listed reasons to use this as a springboard for future research. However, there are limitations that would have to be addressed. An example of future research is the recruitment process that Offices of Enrollment Management use at their PWI. Creating a diverse campus does not occur overnight. Admissions professionals should not use lack of diversity at PWI as a recruitment tactic. A diversity plan should be built into recruitment efforts that would address the campus diversity and provide transparency for the prospective SOC.

Training faculty and administration to work with SOC from a different perspective can also be a challenge. Many faculty members are tenured and have been at their respective PWI for a number of years. Their historical perspective with their PWI may indicate that they are addressing the subject material that they need to in order to successfully instruct their classes. To ask faculty to change their method of teaching to accommodate specific students would be a challenge. The same could be said for administration who have been at the PWI for a number of years. Asking these individuals to change their methods after a number of years could be a difficult task. PWI should approach diversity training and education as a means of creating awareness among the faculty and

administration, soliciting them for input. PWI also have an opportunity to work with SOC from their campus in developing programs. By starting the conversation, progress could be made and training and educational programs can be introduced to the campus utilizing professionals from outside of the organization.

A campus master plan is necessary for PWI to indicate goals that ensure faculty and administration of color need to be representative of the campus body. As indicated in the study, SOC responded that they feel more comfortable with individuals from the campus community who look like them and understand their cultural differences. As turnover occurs at PWI, progress can be made in the hiring practices and future SOC populations will benefit from having faculty and administration that look like them, and understand them.

Establishing culturally familiar places and clubs/organizations that are advised by faculty and administration of color are measures that can be taken by PWI, and can be achieved quicker than any of the prior recommendations. Advisers should be chosen by qualification and not because of their race or ethnic background. Student affairs professionals at PWI should be tasked with establishing areas and spaces where educational seminars and exercises can be held, and are open to the entire campus community. The major limitation on this would be the budgeting and funding that would be needed to host programs for the campus community such as speakers and cultural programs. A budgeting plan will also have to be presented and utilized. PWI should make this a priority.

Another area that future research could look to is the responses of male SOC versus female SOC. Persistence among male SOC could be different from persistence among female SOC. Self-efficacy could also be defined differently among male SOC than female SOC. This is a topic that should be researched and explored.

Finally, when analyzing the responses for each of the IVs there were some responses that indicated a stronger significance than others. Concentrating on specific IV used in this study such as personal identity, campus climate, academic achievement or campus resources, future research can be conducted to indicate which is more important to SOC and could therefore become a working goal toward the retention of SOC. PWI could focus on improving these areas and set up criteria to monitor and make changes where possible.

Conclusion

The achievement gap between SOC and white students is present from the time SOC step foot into the college classroom (Doan, 2015). It is the responsibility of PWI to help SOC feel equal and continue to persist to be academically successful, and to address the needs of its students. By conducting surveys similar to the SSI and other various forms of student research, PWI have the opportunity to address the needs of their student bodies, including SOC. Through this study, a significant relationship is realized on how SOC perceive self-efficacy based on their overall satisfaction of the PWI they were enrolled at in Northeastern Pennsylvania. By identifying key areas that would affect SOC self-efficacy such as academic achievement, personal identity, campus climate and campus resources, there is an opportunity for PWI similar to the three PWI

used in this study to use these findings as a way to recruit and retain SOC and create an environment that is welcoming and diverse for all students.

About the Author

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