



Complex Crossroads: The Association Between Ethnic Identity and LGBTQ+ Membership in Latine College Students



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INTRODUCTION

- Minority stress refers to the negative experiences in a campus environment that students perceive to be linked to social, physical, or cultural attributes salient to the specific minority groups with which individuals identify (Arbona & Jimenez, 2014).
- The risk hypothesis suggests that LGB people of color face more stress than White LGB individuals due to experiencing both homophobia and racism, commonly leading to reduced support from both, their communities of origin, and the mainstream White LGB community (Meyer, 2010).
- Conversely, the resilience hypothesis posits that Black LGB individuals, having experience with racism prior to coming out, may develop resilience against homophobia-related stress and cope better with minority stress compared to their White LGB counterparts (Meyer, 2010). It is unclear whether this applies to all Latinx LGB individuals.

Study Aims

- First, to understand how LGBTQ+ group membership moderates the association between ethnic identity affiliation and minority status stress (MSS) experienced by Latine college students at a predominantly white institution (Figure 1) .
- Second, to explore whether ethnic identity processes, such as commitment and exploration, are associated with minority status stress, and how they may differentially contribute to the experience of MSS.

METHODS

- This is a secondary analysis conducted on R, on a sample of 200 Latine college students enrolled at a private, PWI in Southern California.

Measures

- Minority Status Stress (MSS):** Comprised of 33 items, demonstrating to be highly reliable among Chicane/Latine students ($\alpha = 0.95$).
- Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure Revised (MEIM_R):** This 6-item scale assessed 2 dimensions of ethnic identity: 3 items for exploration ($\alpha = 0.78$) and 3 items for commitment ($\alpha = 0.82$) to ethnicity as a component of one’s self.

Analysis

- Regression models and moderation analyses were used to examine whether LGBTQ+ group membership acts as a moderator in the relationship between ethnic identity affiliation and MSS among Latine college students.

Participants

Variable	n (%)
Gender Identity	
Cis-Gender Women	126 (63)
Cis-Gender Men	65 (32.5)
Non-Binary/Gender Fluid	9 (4.5)
Sexual Orientation	
Queer	84 (42)
Non-Queer	116 (58)

RESULTS

Figure 1. Moderation by Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Theoretical Model

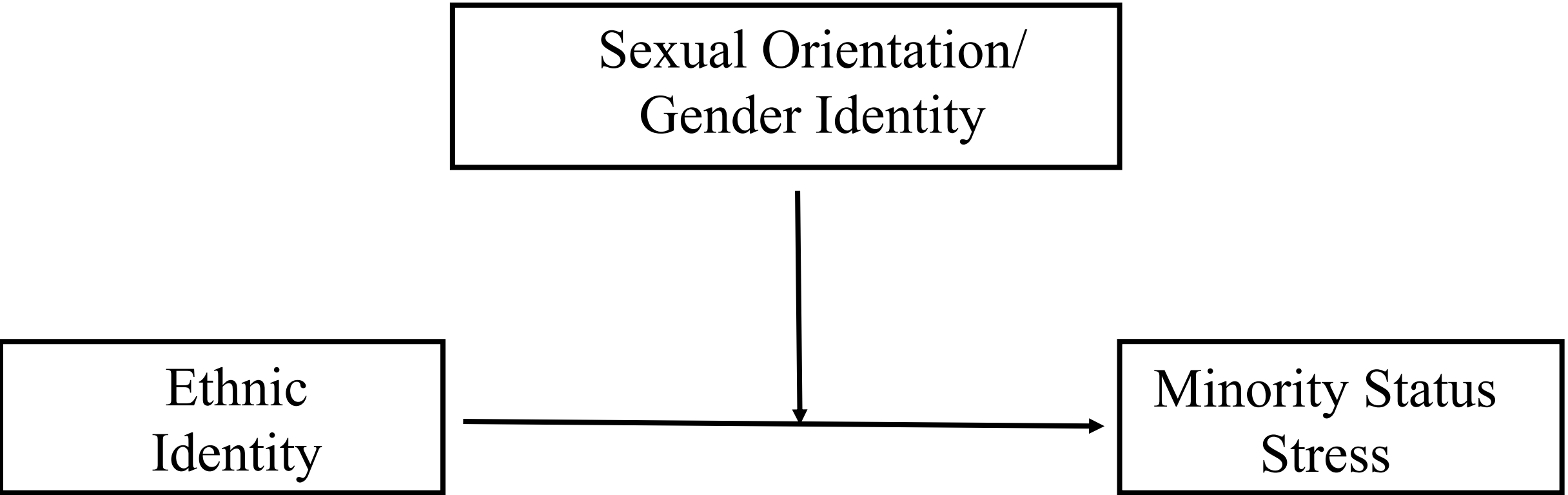


Table 1. Descriptives

Measure	Construct	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3
1. Minority Status Stress Scale (MSS)	Minority Stress	51.41	22.24			
2. Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure-Revised (MEIM-R)	Ethnic Identity Affiliation	4.06	0.75	.28** [.15, .40]		
3. MEIM-R Exploration	Ethnic Identity Exploration	4.09	0.86	.34** [.21, .46]	.83** [.78, .87]	
4. MEIM-R Commitment	Ethnic Identity Commitment	4.04	0.92	.14* [.00, .27]	.85** [.81, .89]	.42** [.29, .52]

Note. *M* = mean, *SD* = standard deviation. Values in square brackets indicate the 95% confidence interval. **p* < .05. ***p* < .01.

Table 2. Ethnic Identity Exploration Was Associated with Higher Levels of MSS

Variable	<i>B</i>	95% CI for <i>B</i>		<i>S.E. B</i>	β	<i>R</i> ²
		[L.L., U.L.]				
Model 1						0.135
(Intercept)	11.12	[-5.19, 27.44]		8.27		
Ethnic Identity Commitment	0.35	[-3.12, 3.82]		1.76	0.01	
Ethnic Identity Exploration	8.67**	[4.97, 12.38]		1.88	0.33**	
Sexual Orientation	8.15*	[2.29, 14.01]		2.9718	0.18**	

Note. *B* = unstandardized regression weights; β = standardized regression weights; L.L. and U.L. = lower and upper limits of a confidence interval, respectively; * *p* < .01. ** *p* < .001

RESULTS

- The model testing sexual orientation as the moderator (Fig. 1), was significant. Although the interaction between ethnic identity and sexual orientation was not significant ($\beta = -0.802, p > 0.05$), ethnic identity had a significant direct effect on minority stress ($\beta = 0.9004$).
- The model testing gender identity as the moderator (Fig. 1), was significant. The interaction effects between ethnic identity and gender identity level 1 (cisgender man) and ethnic identity and gender identity level 2 (non-binary/gender fluid) were not significant ($\beta = -2.994, p = 0.5006$; $\beta = 0.3794, p > 0.05$). Ethnic identity had a significant direct effect on minority stress ($\beta = 0.0206$).
- The linear regression testing ethnic identity commitment and exploration simultaneously revealed that higher levels of exploration resulted in higher minority status stress, over and above sexual orientation. The same effects were not seen with commitment (Table 2).

DISCUSSION

- There was no difference in the effects of ethnic identity affiliation on MSS among queer students and heterosexual, cis-gender students, indicating that our results do not support either the risk or resilience hypothesis. Future studies should conduct research with queer Latine students and measure MSS related to ethnic identity, sexual orientation, and gender identity simultaneously to accurately test these hypotheses.
- Minority status stress did not differ between queer and heterosexual, cis-gender students, thus pointing to MSS being influenced by students’ Latine identity to a greater degree.
- Consistent with the literature, the process of actively seeking one’s ethnic identity was associated with minority status stress whereas having a more committed sense belonging in one’s ethnic identity was not

Limitation and Future Directions

- There was a small sample size of participants who identified as gender minorities, which restricts the generalizability of our results.
- Additionally, we were limited by the availability of reliable scales to measure gender and sexuality minority status stress, which could lead to more accurate findings regarding intersectional identities.

Implications

- College campuses, especially PWIs, have a responsibility to foster a sense of belonging, create inclusive spaces that facilitate ethnic identity exploration, and provide a culturally relevant curriculum to reduce minority stress.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank Professor Bacio for her amazing mentorship and guidance, as well as the CENTRO Lab RAs for their feedback and support. We are also grateful for Mary Peterson’s guidance provided during our data analysis. Lastly, we would like to thank the Ritcher Memorial Funds for making our project possible.

***References provided upon request.