

AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

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Initial Evidence of Reliability and Validity of a New  
Measure of School Racial Climate  
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School racial climate refers to relationships and messages about race, ethnicity, and culture



# Conceptual and methodological concerns with the measurement of school racial climate

Climate vs.  
discrimination



Limited sampling



Focus on  
interactions



Unidimensional  
measures

# Byrd (2014): multiple dimensions of interactions and racial messages can be measured

## Interpersonal interactions

- Quality of interaction
- Frequency of interaction
- Equal status
- Support for positive interaction

## Racial socialization

- Promotion of cultural competence
- Cultural socialization
- Critical consciousness
- Individualism
- Colorblind socialization
- Stereotyping

# Questions about reliability and validity remain



# Participants

- 491 Amazon.com MTurk workers
- College students
- 50% female
- 71% White
- 70% full-time
- 16% community college
- 77% public
- $M$  age=29.30,  $SD$ =10.33

# Validating measures were selected from scales used in multiple studies

- Cultural pluralism (Brand et al. 2003)
- College Interracial Climate Scale (Chavous, 2005; Green et al., 1988)
- Perceived Tension (Hurtado et al. 2008)
- Perceived Discrimination Scale (Kessler et al., 1999)

## The new subscales showed moderate to high reliability

Scale	Cronbach's alpha
equal status	.89
quality of interaction	.74
frequency of interaction	.87
support for positive interaction	.82
promotion of cultural competence	.89
cultural socialization	.83
colorblind socialization	.78
individualism	.81
stereotyping	.91
critical consciousness	.65
discrimination	.75



The new subscales had expected correlations with validating measures

	Cultural Pluralism	Perceived discrimination
Equal status	.490***	-.166
Quality of interaction	.307**	-.257*
Frequency of interaction	.519***	-.187
Support for positive interaction	.750***	-.226†
Promotion of cultural competence	.732***	-.081
Cultural socialization	.624***	.014
Colorblind.	.104	-.001
Individualism	.421***	.011
Stereotyping	-.339**	.462***
Critical consciousness	.296*	.200†

n = 62 to 187	Astin Div. Exp.	Hurtado Participation	Cultural Pluralism	Equal Status	Assoc.	Supportive norms	Interdependence	Perceived discrim.
Equal status	-.081	-.017	.490***	.818***	-.146	.612***	.591***	-.166
Quality of interaction	.010	-.117	.307**	.574***	-.396***	.409***	.492***	-.257*
Frequency of interaction	.118	.101	.519***	.628***	-.328***	.499***	.645***	-.187
Support for positive interaction	.040	-.044	.750***	.484***	-.124	.760***	.550***	-.226†
Promotion of cultural competence	.428***	.369***	.732***	.199†	-.093	.566***	.391***	-.081
Cultural socialization	.386***	.416***	.624***	.179	.003	.492***	.361**	.014
Colorblind.	.011	-.046	.104	.424***	-.007	.288*	.354*	-.001
Individualism	.091	-.091	.421***	.661***	-.240*	.603***	.424***	.011
Stereotyping	.097	.207	-.339**	-.431***	.497***	-.323***	-.142	.462***
Critical consc.	.397***	.350**	.296*	-.163	.324**	.398**	.172	.200†

Future directions include mixed methods research in a variety of settings followed by pilot testing



In conclusion, the SPSRC is a promising way to measure the complexity of school racial climate



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