TITLE: Microaggression Mediating the Effect of Ethnic Identity on Two Types of Civic Engagement

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Introduction: Ethnic identity is associated with community service; however, studies have been inconclusive regarding the extent to which ethnic identity is correlated with other types of civic engagement, such as political participation (Jensen, 2008). It is important to consider different types of civic engagement because they provide different avenues to solving social problems. The current study examined whether microaggression, a subtle and sometimes unintentional form of racial discrimination (Nadal et al., 2014), mediates the effect of ethnic identity on both types of civic engagement. We hypothesize that racial/ethnic minorities who strongly identify with their ethnic group are more aware of microaggression and, as a result, are more likely to engage in civic engagement.

Method: 158 racial/ethnic minority college students completed an online survey as part of a longitudinal study. Measures include the Multi-Group Ethnic Identity Measure (Phinney, 1992), the Racial and Ethnic Microaggressions Scale (Natal, 2011), the community service subscale of the Active & Engaged Citizenship (Zaff et al., 2010) scale, and a question asking participants whether they voted in the 2013 Mayoral Election. A hierarchical linear regression was used with community service as the dependent variable. A binary logistic regression was used with political participation as the dependent variable. In both regression models, ethnic identity was entered into the first block and microaggression was entered into the second block.
Results: Results indicate that ethnic identity was not significantly correlated with microaggression, therefore mediation analyses were not pursued. Ethnic identity was significantly correlated with community service ($B=0.344; p<0.01$), but not political participation ($\text{Exp}(B)=0.975; p<\text{ns}$). Microaggression was also significantly correlated with community service ($B=0.063; p<0.01$), but not political participation ($B=0.994; p<\text{ns}$).

Conclusion: There is no mediation; however, ethnic identity and microaggression are positively correlated with community service, but not with political participation.

Recommendation: Future research should examine why the predictors are only related to community service, but not political participation. It is possible that racial/ethnic minorities feel a stronger attachment to their immediate community which encourages involvement in such community instead of the larger society.