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Racial Experiences, Achievement, and Academic Pressure

India J. Matthews

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Racial Experiences, Achievement, and Academic Pressure

Matthews, India J., Naser, Shereen, and Goncy, Elizabeth

Psychology, Cleveland State University

Abstract

Previous research establishes that high achievement is a predictor of depression and anxiety symptoms. Additionally, research establishes that being a racial minority is a risk factor for depression and anxiety. The literature does not directly identify the relationship between high achievement, race, and depression and anxiety. This study aims to investigate whether there are differences in rates of depression and anxiety in Black high-achieving students compared to White high-achieving peers and explore factors that could influence this relationship. Participants 14-19 years old were recruited from Cleveland State University for this ongoing project. It is expected that Black high-achieving students will experience higher levels of depression and anxiety than their White high-achieving peers. It is also expected that experiences with race will strengthen the relationship between high achievement and depression and anxiety, while academic pressure will mediate this relationship. If the results of this study are consistent with the hypothesis, clinical interventions should focus on addressing race-related stressors as well as academic pressure within Black high-achieving youth. Additionally, schools could focus on implementing resources and culturally competent interventions for high-achieving students to address these disparities in internalizing disorders.

Keywords: racial discrimination, internalized racism, race-related stress, academic pressure, high-achievement, internalizing symptoms, depression, anxiety, youth, adolescents