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COMMUNITY CULTURAL WEALTH: A BUFFER AGAINST RACIAL DISCRIMINATION'S IMPACT ON MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING IN LATINE COLLEGE STUDENTS

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COMMUNITY CULTURAL WEALTH: A BUFFER AGAINST RACIAL
DISCRIMINATION'S IMPACT ON MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING IN LATINE
COLLEGE STUDENTS

By

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A capstone project submitted for Graduation with University Honors

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ABSTRACT

In the United States, there is a present educational attainment disparity between Latine college students and peers from other racial groups and across gender. One major concern that can pose a barrier to education is racial discrimination, which can result in worse mental health (i.e. depressive and anxiety symptoms) and well-being (i.e. hope and satisfaction with life) outcomes. Community cultural wealth (CCW), which refers to the specific cultural assets that help students of color traverse through social inequities, has been shown to improve educational outcomes. For the present study, two domains of CCW, familial capital and social capital, were investigated as a potential buffer to the impact of racial discrimination on mental health and well-being. Gender was explored to account for potential disparities in interactions between CCW and racial discrimination. Results indicate that social capital moderates the relationship between racial discrimination and well-being by improving feelings of hope and life satisfaction. There was a contrast in life satisfaction between men and women, with men showing a significant increase in life satisfaction when possessing higher than average levels of social capital, while women did not experience any significant difference. These findings demonstrate the value of social capital in improving the well-being for Latine college students and implores investment in opportunities such as mentorship programs to help students navigate through institutional challenges. Future studies should examine other domains of community cultural wealth, such as linguistic capital, and how they support skill building, maintaining strong connections with community and culture, and as a protective factor against racial discrimination.

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INTRODUCTION

In the United States, Latine students constitute around 3.3 million of the approximately 16 million undergraduate students enrolled in colleges and universities (National Center for Education Statistics, 2022). Despite their growing presence in higher education, they continue to trail behind White and Asian peers in regards to degree completion (United States Census, 2020). U.S. Census data from 2019 reveals that a discrepancy in degree attainment exists based on gender, in which Latina women earn more bachelor's degrees on average than Latino men. These disparities in education for Latine college students compared to other racial groups and across gender prompt investigation into potential causes, such as racial discrimination, and how protective factors such as cultural assets can serve as a buffer against negative mental health (i.e. depressive/anxiety symptoms) and well-being (i.e. hope and satisfaction with life).

Racial Discrimination

Racial discrimination refers to discrimination at the individual, institutional, and cultural level and can manifest as exclusion, interpersonal hostility, or institutional hostility (Carter et al., 2016). In recent years, the U.S. Latine population has become increasingly subjected to racial discrimination, which can be attributed in part to their presence being linked to undocumented immigration (Flores, 2017). Chavez (2013) coined the idea of the Latino Threat Narrative to elaborate on the growing political and media discourse around Latine immigrants, in which they are perceived as a population that is resistant to assimilating to the American culture and dominant language, thus labeling them as invaders and threats to the economy, national security, and American values. Colorism, which refers to racial discrimination based on skin tone, may also be a contributing factor to racial discrimination (Dixon & Telles, 2017). Prior studies

suggest that dark-skinned Latines were more likely to be discriminated against than lighter-skinned Latines (Frank et al., 2010; Telles & Murguia, 1990).

Latine college student's educational achievement is hindered by racially discriminatory school experiences (Cokley et al., 2017; Martinez et al., 2004), making apparent the vital role that it can play in their educational journey. These injustices are not only perpetuated in predominantly white institutions, but also in Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) through a lack of ethnic/cultural representation in department faculty, exclusion perpetrated by other students, negative comments related to speaking Spanish, and other forms of discrimination (Mejia et al., 2024).

Racial discrimination may also impact Latine men and women differently. Several studies suggest that when it comes to gender, Latino men report greater levels of exposure compared to Latina women (Ornelas & Hong, 2012; Zeiders et al., 2022). Latina women may experience gendered racism that villainizes them and downplays their intelligence based on their intersectional identity (Lopez, 2023). Although Latino men are more likely to experience racial discrimination, it does not necessarily signify that they are affected by it more or less than Latina women.

Mental Health

Depressive and anxiety symptoms are more often present in people of color who have experienced racial discrimination (Wang & Narcisse, 2025), which can potentially affect academic outcomes. Depressive symptoms can manifest as depressed mood, feelings of worthlessness, restlessness, and sleep disturbance (Radloff, 1977) while anxiety symptoms can manifest as excessive worry, fear, and tension, along with sleep disturbance and poor appetite (Beck et al., 1988). Latina women have been shown to possess higher rates of depression and

anxiety than Latino men (Ornelas and Hong, 2012; Wassertheil-Smoller et al., 2014), although this is not linked exclusively to racial discrimination.

Well-Being

Hope and satisfaction with life, two indices of well-being, may help with achieving better educational outcomes. According to Snyder's hope theory (1991), hope consists of: confidence in being able to identify strategies to achieve goals (pathways) and having the motivation to achieve their goals using their pathways (agency). Hope might not be as impacted by racial discrimination compared to mental health outcomes, since it can broaden the mind to possibilities of a brighter present and future. Satisfaction with life refers to cognitive appraisal of one's own life (Diener et al., 1985). General life satisfaction includes satisfaction across different life domains, such as school and the workplace, meaning it may be less susceptible to being affected by discrimination unless it is pervasive across multiple areas of life. One study on the impact of racial discrimination on hope and life satisfaction alludes to minor effects on these aspects of well-being (Murphy et al., 2024). Moreover, gender differences in well-being outcomes for impacted Latine college students remains mostly unexplored in the literature, urging further investigation into this topic.

Community Cultural Wealth

Yosso's community cultural wealth (CCW) theoretical framework (2005) challenges the "cultural deficit" perspective in education that jeopardizes positive outcomes for students of color by perpetuating a blameful attitude towards their inability to navigate higher education (McKay & Devlin, 2016), lowers expectations for these students (Bruton & Robles-Piña, 2009), and upholds classist and racist viewpoints that educational gaps are a product of moral, intellectual, and cultural deficiencies instead of systematic oppression (Weiner, 2003). The CCW

framework explains that students of color possess empowering wells of knowledge, skills, strengths, and experiences that help navigate through and resist racial oppression, such as cultural values and traditions fostered through family and community. The present study will focus on two facets of CCW: familial capital and social capital.

Familial capital refers to the family and kin that play an integral role in cultivating cultural values, knowledge, and traditions for students of color, as well as the pillars of support they provide. A study by Cuevas (2025) underlined the importance of parental, sibling, and extended family support and how they provided different types of support, such as through encouragement, advice, and providing emotional warmth. Latine cultural values and traditions, such as maintaining close family relationships and behaving according to family expectations can reduce negative mental health outcomes (Corona et al., 2017). Given that Latine men and women are socialized differently growing up by their families, with women describing less freedom in their households compared to men (Raffaelli & Ontai, 2004), there may be a tangible difference in perceived levels of familial capital based on gender. It is important to note, however, that these imposed familial restrictions may only affect aspects of familial capital pertaining to connectedness with family and kind, and not those related to things such as cultural knowledge and values passed down by family.

Social capital encompasses the social and community networks that students of color draw support from. In the university context, mentorship and community is especially important for academic success and can potentially improve mental health and well-being outcomes. Delgado-Guerrero and Gloria (2023) found that peer, staff, and faculty mentors engaged students in distinct ways that helped students navigate through higher education. Campus involvement, such as through clubs and organizations, is another source of social capital that can help students

incorporate themselves into the campus community and benefit from positive mental health and well-being outcomes (Bye et al., 2020; Sotaquirá, 2022). For Latine college students, gender may contribute to increased difficulty with accessing social capital. One study found that Latino men in college may be more likely to internally cope instead of seeking out social support than Latina women (Rodriguez et al., 2016), implying that social capital may be higher for women.

However, there is still a need for further exploration of gender disparities in social capital for Latine college students.

Current Study

The impact of CCW on academic outcomes and racial discrimination for Latine college students is a widely researched topic. However, there is a noticeable gap in terms of whether the familial and social capitals buffer the impact of racial discrimination on mental health and well-being while taking into account gender differences. To substantiate the findings of previous literature as well as address the present literature gap, we explored several research questions: 1) Does racial discrimination predict higher anxiety and depressive symptoms? 2) Does racial discrimination predict lower hope and satisfaction with life? 3) Does social capital buffer the impact of racial discrimination on mental health outcomes? 3a) Does this interaction change based on gender? 4) Does familial capital buffer the impact of racial discrimination on well-being? 4a) Does this interaction change based on gender? We hypothesize that: racial discrimination will predict worse mental health and well-being outcomes (Hypotheses 1 and 2), familial and social capital will weaken the impact of racial discrimination on mental health outcomes while improving well-being (Hypotheses 3 and 4), and that male Latino students will benefit more from familial capital while female Latina students will benefit more from social capital (Hypotheses 3a and 4a).

METHOD

Participants and Procedure

Following IRB approval, 319 undergraduate Latine students attending the University of California, Riverside (75% female and 25% male; $M_{\text{Age}} = 19.37$, $SD = 2.24$) participated in the College Student Identity Project in 2023, which broadly investigated life experiences, identity, culture, and science interests among undergraduate college students. Participants completed a 60-minute survey through Qualtrics and were compensated with partial course credit for an introductory psychology course. All participants completed electronic consent forms before completing the survey. From the final analytical dataset for this project, 7 participants were excluded due to low sample size for non-binary participants to conduct separate analysis for gender effects and 1 participant was excluded because of missing data for the racial discrimination measurement.

Measures

To establish internal reliability, the Cronbach's α for each measure was calculated to assess whether or not the set of items tested for the same construct. The Cronbach's α for each multi-item measure included in the study indicated values ≥ 0.70 , representing an acceptable level of internal consistency for each measure.

Gender and Age: Participants reported gender and age in the demographic portion of the survey.

Community Cultural Wealth: Familial and social capital were measured using the Community Cultural Wealth Scale (Hiramori et al., 2021). Using a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 = *Strongly Disagree* to 5 = *Strongly Agree*, an 11-item familial capital subscale and an 8-item social capital subscale were used to separately measure both facets of CCW. The average

of each subscale was used to determine scores for familial and social capital separately, ranging from 1 - 5. Cronbach's α for familial capital and social capital = 0.85 and 0.83, respectively.

Racial Discrimination: The Brief Perceived Ethnic Discrimination Questionnaire - Community Version (BPEDQ-CV) was used to measure perceived ethnic/racial discrimination (Brondolo et al., 2005). Using a 17-item measure on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 = *Never* to 5 = *Always*, score averages ranged from 1 - 5 (Cronbach's α = 0.94).

Depressive Symptoms: Participant's depressive symptoms were measured using a 20-item measure from the Center for Epidemiologic Studies-Depression Scale (CES-D) and presented on a 4-point Likert scale, ranging from 0 = *Rarely or None of the Time (Less than 1 Day)* to 3 = *Most or All of the Time (5-7 Days)* (Radloff, 1977), with a score range from 0 - 60 (Cronbach's α = 0.79)

Anxiety Symptoms: Participant's anxiety symptoms were assessed using an adapted 18-item measure from the Beck Anxiety Inventory (BAI) and presented on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 = *Strongly Disagree* and 5 = *Strongly Agree* (Beck et al., 1988) and evaluated anxiety symptoms based on a total score range from 18 - 90 (Cronbach's α = 0.92).

Satisfaction with Life: Participant's global cognitive judgments of their satisfaction with life was assessed using a 5-item measure and presented on a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 = *Strongly Disagree* to 7 = *Strong Agree* (Diener et al., 1985), and with a total score ranging from 5 - 35 (Cronbach's α = 0.87).

Hope: Participant's hope was assessed using the Adult Hope Scale (Snyder et al., 1991). Using an 8-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 = *Definitely False* to 8 = *Definitely True*, a 4-item agency (goal-directed determination) subscale and 4-item pathway (planning of ways to meet goals) subscale were used for measurement. The sum scores of agency and pathway was used to

score hope, with scores ranging from 8 - 64. Cronbach's α for hope items (including both subscales) = 0.87.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using the IBM SPSS Statistics software (Version 31) through the PROCESS Macro (Hayes, 2022). Data visualization for moderated regression outcomes were created in R Studio using the ggplot2 and interactions packages. To gauge the strength and directionality of variable associations, bivariate correlation analyses were performed. Multiple regression analyses were conducted to investigate whether racial discrimination predicted mental health and well-being outcomes. To understand how familial and social capital moderate the relationship between racial discrimination and mental health and well-being, four separate moderation analyses were conducted for each separate domain of CCW to examine depressive symptoms, anxiety symptoms, hope, and life satisfaction, respectively. Racial discrimination and both CCW domains were mean centered prior to analysis. Gender was included as a second moderator only for models in which the interaction effect between racial discrimination and familial/social capital was significant.

RESULTS

Descriptives and Bivariate Correlations

Descriptive statistics and bivariate correlations for variables of interest are reported in **Table 1**. Of note, the *M* reported value of racial discrimination was 1.56, on a scale from 1 - 5, alluding to a positively skewed distribution in which most data values lie on the left side that denotes the lower values. Social capital and familial capital were found to be moderately correlated, $R = 0.37$. Depressive symptoms were highly correlated with anxiety symptoms, $R =$

0.76. Hope and satisfaction with life were found to not be correlated with racial discrimination, $p > 0.05$.

Multiple Regression Analyses

To understand whether racial discrimination predicted mental health and well-being, a set of four multiple regression models were performed, with age and gender being included as covariates.

The first multiple regression model looked into racial discrimination as a predictor of depressive symptoms. Results indicate that the overall model was significant, $F(3, 307) = 25.34$, $R^2 = 0.19$, $p < .01$, suggesting that 19% of the variation observed in depressive symptoms can be explained by the model. Racial discrimination was found to significantly and positively predict depressive symptoms, $b = 6.88$, $t(307) = 8.10$, $p < 0.01$, meaning that a one-unit increase in racial discrimination leads to a 6.88 increase in depressive symptom score.

The second multiple regression model looked into racial discrimination as a predictor of anxiety symptoms. Results show that the overall model was significant, $F(3, 307) = 22.23$, $R^2 = 0.18$, $p < 0.01$, suggesting that 18% of the variation observed in anxiety symptoms can be explained by the model. Racial discrimination was found to significantly and positively predict anxiety symptoms, $b = 10.06$, $t(307) = 7.58$, $p < 0.01$, meaning that a one-unit increase in racial discrimination leads to a 10.06 increase in anxiety symptom score.

The third multiple regression model looked into racial discrimination as a predictor of hope. Results indicate that the overall model was significant, $F(307) = 3.22$, $R^2 = 0.02$, $p = 0.02$, suggesting that 2% of the variation observed in hope can be explained by the model. However, racial discrimination was found to not predict hope, $b = 0.26$, $t(307) = 0.36$, $p = 0.72$.

The fourth multiple regression model looked into racial discrimination as a predictor of satisfaction with life. Results indicate that the overall model was not significant, $F(307) = 1.61$,

$R^2 = 0.01$, $p = 0.19$, meaning that the set of predictors included in the model do not explain a significant amount of variance in the data. Racial discrimination was also found to not predict satisfaction with life, $b = -0.56$, $t(307) = -0.96$, $p = 0.34$.

Familial Capital Moderation Analyses

The first moderated regression model significantly predicted depressive symptoms, $F(4, 306) = 16.66$, $R^2 = 0.23$, $p < .01$. Racial discrimination predicted greater depressive symptoms, $b = 6.70$, $t(306) = 8.03$, $p < .01$, while familial capital predicted less symptoms, $b = -3.41$, $t(306) = -4.59$, $p < .01$. However, the interaction between familial capital and racial discrimination was not statistically meaningful, $b = 0.60$, $t(306) = 0.65$, $p = 0.52$. This suggests that although racial discrimination and familial capital individually predict depressive symptoms, the effect of racial discrimination on depressive symptoms does not vary across different levels of familial capital.

The second moderated regression model significantly predicted anxiety symptoms, $F(4, 306) = 16.66$, $R^2 = 0.23$, $p < .01$. Racial discrimination predicted greater anxiety symptoms, $b = 9.89$, $t(306) = 7.42$, $p < .01$, while familial capital predicted less symptoms, $b = -3.19$, $t(306) = -2.69$, $p < .01$. However, the interaction between familial capital and racial discrimination was not statistically significant, $b = 0.38$, $t(306) = 0.26$, $p = 0.80$. This suggests that the effect of racial discrimination on anxiety symptoms does not vary across different levels of familial capital.

The third moderated regression model significantly predicted hope, $F(4, 306) = 17.37$, $R^2 = 0.19$, $p < .01$. Familial capital predicted higher hope, $b = 4.51$, $t(306) = 7.59$, $p < .01$, but racial discrimination did not meaningfully predict hope, $b = 0.43$, $t(306) = 0.64$, $p = 0.52$. The interaction between familial capital and racial discrimination was also not statistically

significant, $b = 0.30$, $t(306) = 0.40$, $p = 0.69$, suggesting that the effect of racial discrimination on hope is not significant both individually and when looking at different levels of familial capital.

The fourth moderated regression model significantly predicted satisfaction with life, $F(4, 306) = 13.98$, $R^2 = 0.15$, $p < .01$. Familial capital predicted higher life satisfaction, $b = 3.22$, $t(306) = 6.72$, $p < .01$, but discrimination did not meaningfully predict life satisfaction, $b = -0.46$, $t(306) = -0.86$, $p = 0.39$. The interaction between familial capital and racial discrimination was also not statistically significant, $b = 0.56$, $t = 0.95$, $p = 0.34$, suggesting that the effect of racial discrimination on satisfaction with life is not significant both individually and when looking at different levels of familial capital.

Social Capital Moderation Analyses

The first moderated regression model significantly predicted depressive symptoms, $F(4, 306) = 19.49$, $R^2 = 0.20$, $p < .01$. Racial discrimination was shown to predict higher depressive symptoms, $b = 7.40$, $t(304) = 7.44$, $p < .01$, while social capital predicted fewer symptoms, $b = -2.00$, $t(304) = -2.91$, $p < .01$. The interaction between social capital and depressive symptoms was not statistically meaningful, $b = 0.07$, $t(304) = 0.09$, $p = 0.93$, suggesting that different levels of social capital does not significantly impact the effect of racial discrimination on depressive symptoms.

The second moderated regression model significantly predicted anxiety symptoms, $F(4, 304) = 14.73$, $R^2 = 0.16$, $p < .001$. Racial discrimination predicted higher anxiety symptoms, $b = 9.70$, $t(304) = 6.16$, $p < .01$, while social capital did not significantly predict anxiety symptoms, $b = -0.79$, $t(304) = -0.72$, $p = 0.47$, suggesting that different levels of social capital does not significantly impact the effect of racial discrimination on anxiety symptoms.

The third moderated regression model significantly predicted hope, $F(4, 304) = 15.45$, $R^2 = 0.17$, $p < 0.01$. Social capital predicted higher hope, $b = 3.52$, $t(304) = 6.44$, $p < .01$, while racial discrimination predicted lower hope, $b = -1.68$, $t(304) = -2.13$, $p = 0.03$. Social capital was found to moderate the relationship between racial discrimination and hope, $b = 3.52$, $t(304) = 6.44$, $p < 0.01$ and accounts for a 1% increase in model variance, $\Delta R^2 = 0.01$, $F(1, 304) = 4.93$, $p = 0.03$. To probe this interaction, a simple slope analysis was performed, as visualized in **Figure 1**. At low levels of social capital ($-1 SD$), the relationship between racial discrimination and hope was significant, $b = -3.20$, $t(304) = -3.61$, $p < 0.01$. At average levels of social capital, the relationship was meaningful, $b = -2.17$, $t(304) = -3.43$, $p < 0.01$. At high levels of social capital ($+1 SD$), the relationship was significant, $b = -1.14$, $t(304) = -2.03$, $p = 0.04$. When including both social capital and gender as moderators, the model was no longer significant, $\Delta R^2 = 0.01$, $F(1, 304) = 2.29$, $p = 0.1$, indicating that social capital only moderates the relationship between racial discrimination and hope when not accounting for gender differences.

The fourth moderated regression model significantly predicted satisfaction with life, $F(4, 304) = 13.05$, $R^2 = 0.15$, $p < 0.01$. Social capital did not meaningfully predict satisfaction with life, $b = 0.53$, $t(304) = 0.57$, $p = 0.57$, while racial discrimination did predict lower satisfaction with life, $b = -5.48$, $t(304) = -3.33$, $p < 0.01$. Social capital was found to moderate the relationship between racial discrimination and satisfaction with life, $b = 1.26$, $t(304) = 2.66$, $p < 0.01$. Both social capital and gender jointly account for a 2% increase in model variance, $\Delta R^2 = 0.02$, $F(2, 304) = 7.58$, $p < 0.01$. To probe this interaction, a simple slope analysis was performed, as visualized in **Figure 2**. At lower levels of social capital ($-1 SD$), the relationship between racial discrimination and satisfaction with life was significant for both females ($b = -2.91$, $t(304) = -3.15$, $p < 0.01$) and males ($b = -4.31$, $t(304) = -3.28$, $p < 0.01$), signifying that

males experience who racial discrimination report less satisfaction with life than females when they possess lower levels of social capital on average. At average levels of social capital, the relationship is meaningful for both females ($b = -1.83$, $t(304) = -2.62$, $p < 0.01$) and males ($b = -3.23$, $t(304) = -2.89$, $p < 0.01$), which signifies that males report lower satisfaction with life than females who experience racial discrimination and possess an average level of social capital. At high levels of social capital, the relationship is not significant for females ($b = -0.75$, $t(304) = -1.14$, $p = 0.26$) but is significant for males ($b = -2.15$, $t(304) = -2.07$, $p = 0.04$), indicating that males benefit more from higher levels of social capital than females.

DISCUSSION

Prior research has extensively documented the detrimental effects of racial discrimination on mental health and well-being (Murphy et al., 2024; Ornelas & Hong, 2013; Wang & Narcisse, 2025). These studies are informative in terms of addressing the prevalence of racial discrimination and its resulting consequences on mental health/well-being, but they do not address protective factors that can protect against negative outcomes. There exists a large body of research surrounding CCW as an integral component to higher education navigation and success for students of color (Cuevas, 2025; Delgado-Guerrero & Gloria, 2025; Yosso, 2005), but its role as a protective factor that can remedy the negative impact of racial discrimination on mental health and well-being for Latine college students remains mostly unexplored in the literature. The present study aimed to address this gap by exploring the efficacy of two facets of CCW, social and familial capital, as potential buffers against depressive/anxiety symptoms and hope/satisfaction with life exacerbated by racial discrimination, while also taking into consideration gender differences.

In accordance with what was hypothesized, racial discrimination predicted higher depressive and anxiety symptoms. Surprisingly, it did not directly predict any changes in hope or satisfaction with life. Murphy and colleagues (2024) suggested that well-being outcomes were negatively impacted by racial discrimination, despite the association itself being weak. Since hope pertains to the ability to strategize achieving goals and possessing the motivation to reach said goals, it could possess more of a role as a protective factor and thus not be as affected unless other major stressors that limit goal attainment are present. Life satisfaction might not be impacted by racial discrimination unless it has a ubiquitous presence in someone's life.

Contrary to what was hypothesized, familial capital did not weaken the relationship between racial discrimination and mental health or well-being outcomes. One possible explanation for this is that Latine cultures are more likely to stigmatize against those who discuss issues related to mental health and well-being (Forcén et al., 2023). Although cultural values such as familism (i.e., loyalty and connectedness to family and kin) can help deter poor mental health outcomes, stigma against help-seeking behavior and mental health overall can make it more appealing to internalize issues instead of seeking out support from family to properly address them. This internalization can result in worse mood (Kann et al., 2016), and higher depressive symptoms and feelings of worry (McLaughlin et al., 2007). Age is another possible explanation. Adolescents and children might be able to rely more on family and kin while navigating through racial discrimination because they live together with them, but communication might not be as frequent between college students and their families and kin.

Social capital was shown to significantly improve hope and life satisfaction despite the presence of racial discrimination, though it did not directly weaken the impact of racial discrimination on depressive or anxiety symptoms. Expanding social networks and accessing

community resources can make it easier for Latine college students to identify strategies and find the motivation necessary to achieve their goals (hope), or feel satisfied with their life in terms of campus belonging, academic progress, and peer and faculty relationships (life satisfaction).

However, given that depressive and anxiety symptoms are oftentimes complex and that expressing struggles with mental health are often stigmatized in Latine cultures as shown by Forcén et al. (2023), it may be that Latine students stray away from discussing these topics even with their social networks due to cultural stigma.

Finally, the lack of gender differences across both domains of CCW on the relationship between racial discrimination and mental health and hope was unexpected. Nonetheless, social capital was shown to provide a greater benefit for Latino men than Latina women when it came to life satisfaction outcomes in the face of racial discrimination. Considering that Latino men report higher frequency of experiences with racial discrimination (Ornelas & Hong, 2012; Zeiders et al., 2022), possessing higher levels of social capital may provide a sufficiently broad range of social support and community resources to help these students feel more content despite being confronted with negative racial stressors.

Limitations and Future Directions

This study offers valuable insights into the value of CCW as a means of combatting negative mental health and well-being outcomes related to racial discrimination, as well as the joint role of social capital and gender in moderating life satisfaction outcomes. Regardless, this study is not without its limitations.

The findings of this study may not generalize to the Latine student population across the United States, considering that the sample population is derived from only one university campus. Additionally, the university from which this sample was taken from is a Hispanic

Serving Institution (HSI). Although racially discriminatory experiences can still occur in HSIs (Mejia et al., 2024), it might not be as prevalent when compared to institutions in which Latine students comprise a small percentage of the student population, such as in predominantly white institutions (Von Robertson et al., 2016). Different campuses might not possess the same quantity or quality of culturally-competent resources that can help Latine students build their social capital (Chaney et al., 1998).

Of note, Latine culture is not a monolith that only refers to one specific cultural group. There are other cultural groups from central and South America that may share many similarities with other Latine cultures, but there can potentially be key differences in terms of family dynamics, mental health stigma, etc. The sample used for this study consisted primarily of Mexican-origin participants, meaning that other Latine cultural groups were not as represented or were completely absent.

Furthermore, this study only looked at participants during one time point, instead of looking at their responses across different time points. Since the majority of students were around the age of a typical first or second year student, it signals that the results for this study might primarily reflect first/second year student's subjective experiences and overlook the experiences of third and fourth year students. It is important to understand how familial and social capital evolve through time, as it is possible that social capital varies greatly between a first and fourth year student given that fourth year students have had more time on campus to build upon their social networks compared to first year students, and how this may impact mental health and well-being outcomes in return (Hanimoğlu, 2025; Ruihua, 2025; Xiang et al., 2020)

The growing representation of Latine college students in higher education, as well as the educational attainment disparity between them and White and Asian peers implores further

research into how their mental health and well-being can be properly addressed at the university level. A number of college students choose to live away from home, which can make it more difficult to maintain familial capital and increase student reliance on social capital to navigate through the higher education system (Sasser et al., 2023; Tsai et al., 2013.) Although familial capital may not directly moderate the relationship between racial discrimination and mental health and well-being outcomes, it is possible that the cultural capital nurtured by family and kin may be indirectly related to whether or not students engage with opportunities to develop social networks.

Future studies should also explore different facets of CCW, especially linguistic capital, to investigate whether they buffer the impact of racial discrimination on mental health and well-being. Linguistic capital can be especially important for Latine college students since many of them come from families that speak English, Spanish, or both. This capital could complement other facets of CCW, such as familial capital and social capital, by providing students with broader access to family and people in the community who only speak Spanish. Additionally, it can develop skills, such as communication, interpretation, storytelling, etc. that promote memorization, detail-orientation, and public speaking (Yosso, 2005).

Conclusions

There is a pressing need for higher education institutions to develop culturally competent approaches that acknowledge the unique skills and challenges that Latine college students bring with them on their educational journey. Racial discrimination is a form of adversity that can burden the U.S. Latine college student population and can potentially compound with other stressors generally encountered in college, such as heavy academic workloads and burnout. It is critical that future research profoundly explores the shared cultural values, traditions, and history

that is reflected by members belonging to Latine cultural groups, which would also entail comparing and contrasting the experiences of Latino men and Latina women and understanding how the different domains of community cultural wealth distinctively can shape their mental health and well-being trajectories. Overall, to bridge the existing educational gap, higher education institutions must foster a nurturing environment that condemns discrimination and where students have access to a broad range of opportunities to broaden their social and community support networks on campus.

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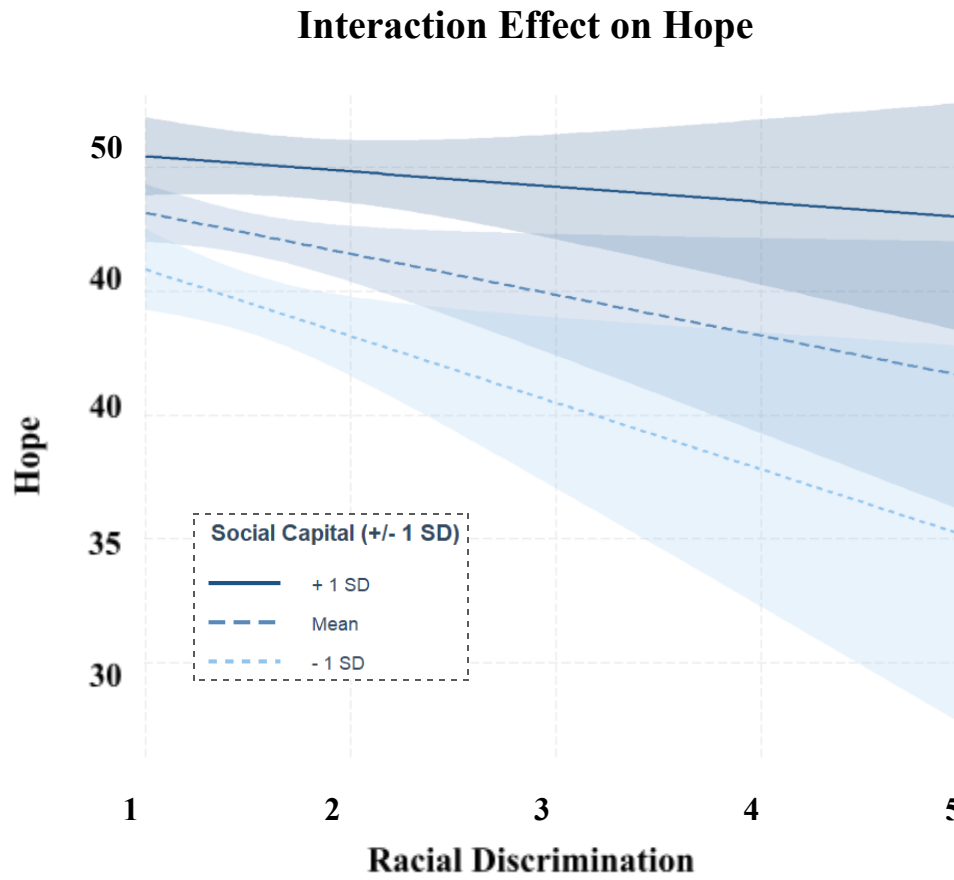
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TABLES and FIGURES

Variable	N	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Racial Discrimination	311	1.56	0.63	-							
2. Gender	311	-	-	0.01	-						
3. Age	311	19.37	2.24	0.04	-0.03	-					
4. Familial Capital	311	3.95	0.73	-.03	0.03	0.04	-				
5. Social Capital	311	2.63	0.82	0.23**	0.03	0.03	0.37**	-			
6. Depressive Symptoms	311	20.02	10.54	0.41**	-0.13*	-0.1	-0.24**	-0.06	-		
7. Anxiety Symptoms	311	44.6	16.28	0.39**	-0.13*	-0.08	-0.15**	0.06	0.76**	-	
8. Hope	311	47.41	8.19	0.03	0.09	0.14*	0.4**	0.37**	-0.36**	-0.19**	-
9. Satisfaction with Life	311	22.57	6.48	-0.05	0.03	0.1	0.37**	0.32**	-0.46**	-0.32**	0.6**

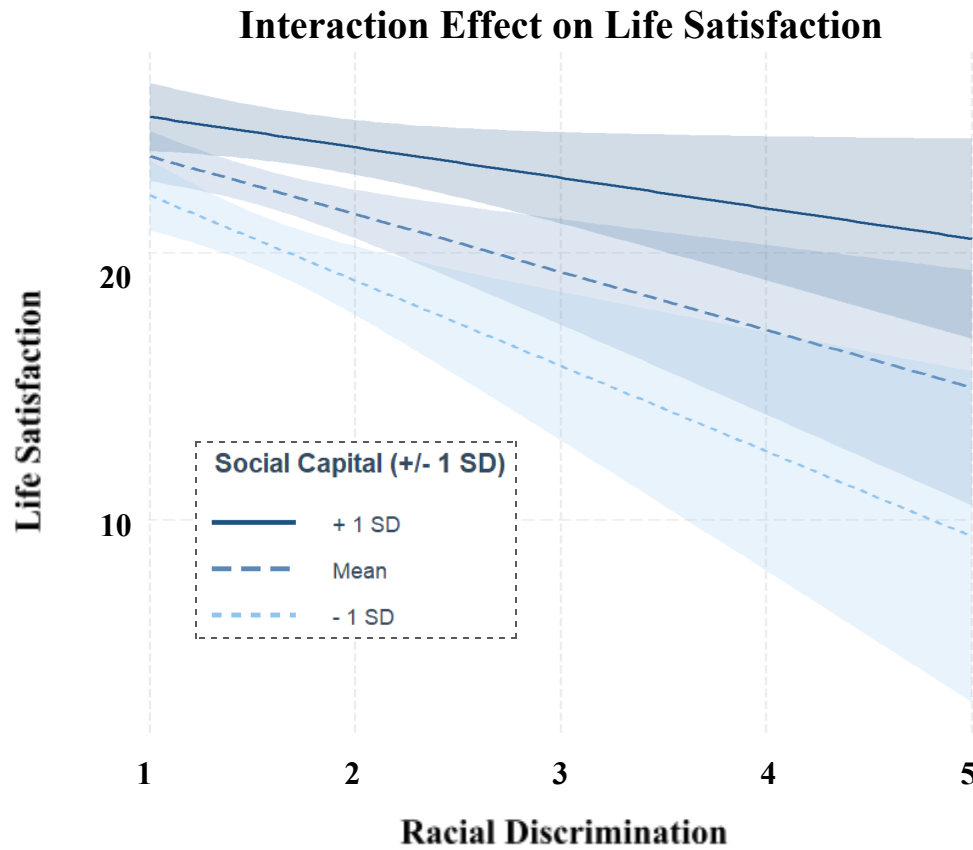
Table 1. Descriptive Statistics and Bivariate Correlations. Note: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < .01$.

Figure 1



Note: This figure shows the simple slope analysis to help interpret the interaction effect of social capital on racial discrimination across three different values of hope. The shaded regions represent confidence intervals, with the low overlap demonstrating statistical significance.

Figure 2



Note: This figure shows the simple slope analysis to help interpret the interaction effect of social capital on racial discrimination across three different values of satisfaction with life. The shaded regions represent confidence intervals, with the low overlap demonstrating statistical significance.