

The Relationship between Self-Concept and Self-Handicapping Behaviors among Ethnic Minority College Students



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Background

- College students face many challenges and adversities while attending a university and pursuing their undergraduate degree. Students strive to meet academic goals and are faced with academic rigor that elicit stress and anxiety. In addition to traditional student demands, ethnic minority students may face other challenges that are unique to their ethnic group membership.
- In response to these challenges, students may engage in maladaptive behaviors that potentially diminishes academic success. A phenomenon that has been examined is self-handicapping. *The engagement in self-handicapping preserves one's self-image as well as their reputation in the presence of others.* Previous literature highlights the use of academic self-handicapping when students, their academic achievement, and ability are put on display.
- The purpose of this study was to examine the relationships between self-concept and self-handicapping behaviors among Latino/a/x college students. GPA was also examined in order to have an estimate of academic history.

Research Question & Hypotheses

Research Question

- Does an individual's self-concept relate to self-handicapping?

Hypotheses

- The more imposter feelings one has, the more likely they are to engage in self-handicapping.
- The stronger and more positive one's ethnic identity, the less likely they are to engage in self-handicapping.
- Higher self-esteem will be associated with being less likely to engage in self-handicapping.
- The lower one's GPA, the more likely they are to engage in self-handicapping.

Constructs

- Self-handicapping** involves actions or inactions that inhibit performance and provide an individual with an external explanation for potential failure. These explanations are external and, therefore, do not inflict damage to self-image.
- Self-concept** is a combination of different psychological factors. This study focuses on the following factors: imposter feelings, ethnic identity, and self-esteem.

Methods

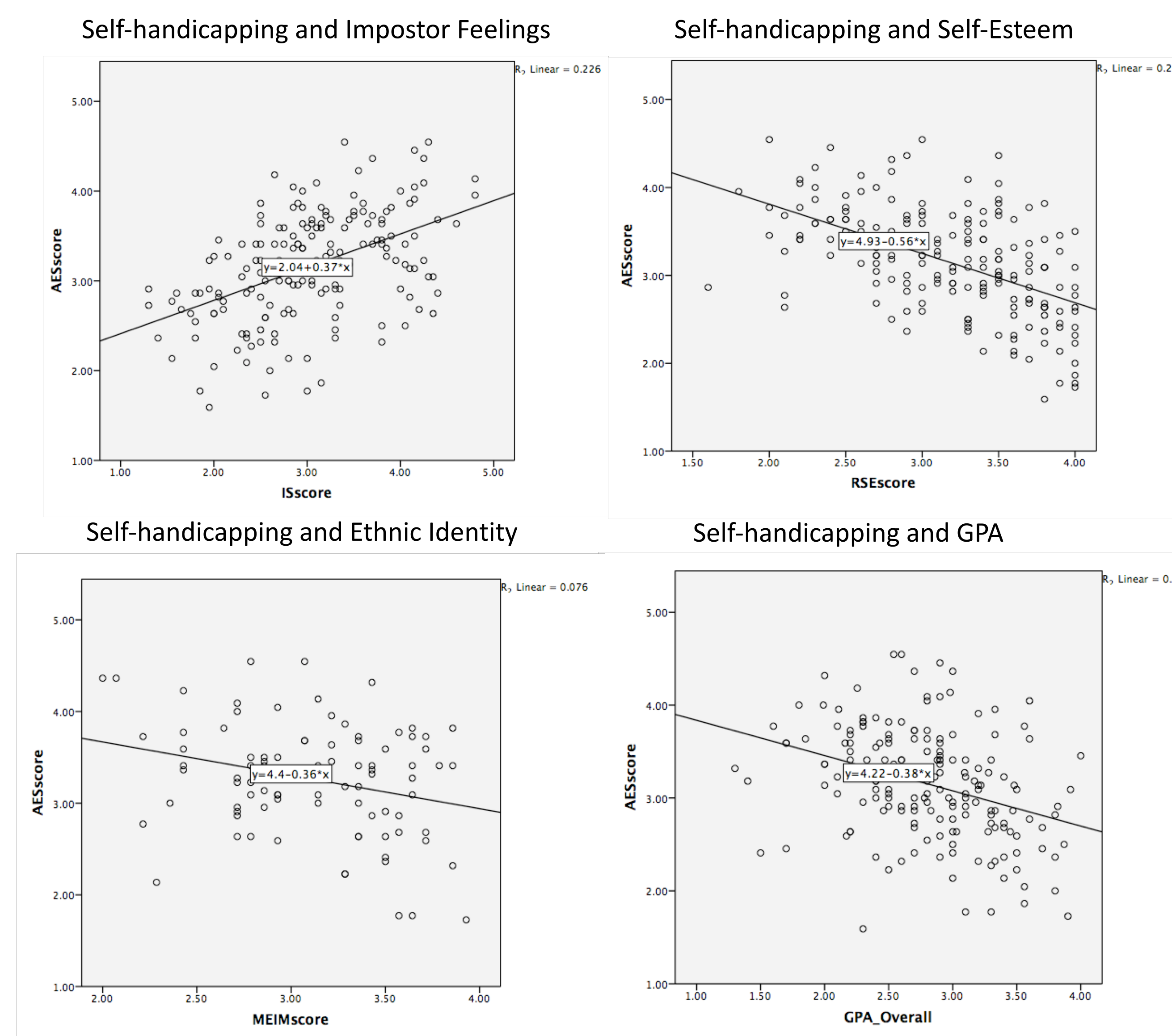
Participants

- Data from 219 undergraduate students, who identify as Latino/a/x, was used for this study. Participants are from a diverse, Southern California university.

Procedure

- Students volunteered to participate in a study that claimed to be investigating how to succeed in college. Students had access to a computer lab where they were administered the survey online.
- Survey administered to students included demographics, academia information, the Academic Self-Handicapping Questionnaire (Murray & Warden, 1992), the Clance Impostor Phenomenon Scale (Clance, 1985), the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965) and the Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (Phinney, 1992).

Results



Regression Analysis of Self-Handicapping and Self-Concept

Predictor	β	SE	t	p
Impostor	.349	.081	3.35	.001
Self-Esteem	-.207	.118	-1.97	.053
Identity	-.179	.113	-2.01	.048
GPA	-.278	.108	-3.07	.003

Discussion

Findings

- Hypotheses were supported by data. Specifically, Latino/a/x students are more likely to engage in self-handicapping if they have higher impostor feelings, a lower or more negative self-esteem, a lower or weaken sense of ethnic identity, and a lower GPA.
- Self-concept partially explains why people may engage in self-handicapping.
- Ethnic identity plays a significant role in why ethnic minority students engage in self-handicapping behaviors.

Limitations

- Self-report data can skew responses.
- We want to recognize diversity but Latino/a/x is not a homogenous group. We do not have enough data from each sub-ethnic group to accurately explore within-group variability.

Implications

- This data contributes to efforts in attempt to reduce self-handicapping. This includes interventions to address self-esteem or seminars to address how to manage imposter feelings.
- The consideration of ethnic identity and its relation to self-handicapping is a new contribution to the field of study.

Future Directions

- Expand the participant pool to consider and compare all different ethnic minority groups.

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