2019

Frequency of Academic Interactions with Racial and Ethnic Minority Students and Student Attitudes towards Campus Diversity and Diversity Programs

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Thesis title   Frequency of Academic Interactions with Racial and Ethnic Minority Students and Student Attitudes towards Campus Diversity and Diversity Programs

Intended date of commencement   May 7, 2019

Read, approved, and signed by: _____ _____

Thesis adviser(s)

_____   5/7/19
                                        Date

_____   Date

Reader(s)

_____   Date

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Frequency of Academic Interactions with Racial and Ethnic Minority Students and Student Attitudes towards Campus Diversity and Diversity Programs

A Thesis

Presented to the Department of Sociology and Criminology

College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Of Butler University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for Graduation Honors

Sydney Theerman

May 9, 2019

Abstract

In response to concerns about differential access to higher education and the recognition of the value of diversity, universities are developing new programs to promote diversity and inclusive learning experiences on their campuses. Given this, it is important to understand what factors increase student support and understanding of the benefits of campus diversity in order to create an inclusive and tolerant campus environment. A number of studies have examined the impact of close friendships with people of minority race or ethnicity on students' experiences with racial/ethnic diversity. This study adds to this research by focusing on interracial and interethnic academic and school-sponsored activity interactions. The purpose of this study is to examine whether frequency of substantive academic and extracurricular interactions with people of minority races and ethnicities is related to students' support for and attitudes towards campus diversity and diversity programs. Academic and extracurricular interactions include interactions with others of minority race and ethnicity at events related to schoolwork or education, along with outside school-sponsored organizations. I hypothesize that greater frequency of interaction with students in minority racial and ethnic groups is associated with greater support for campus diversity and greater knowledge of, and participation in, diversity programs. Additionally, I hypothesize that greater frequency of interaction with students of minority racial and ethnic groups is related to more positive opinions of diversity programs on campus. Student interaction information and information concerning knowledge and opinions on campus diversity programs was collected via survey from 150 Butler students. Contrary to my main hypothesis, no significant relationship was found between academic and extracurricular

interactions with minority students and student attitudes towards campus diversity. However, consistent with my other hypotheses, greater frequency of academic and extracurricular interactions was found to be related to greater awareness of and participation in diversity programming, as well as more positive attitudes towards Butler's diversity programs.

Literature Review

Racial and ethnic diversity is an important issue in society today, especially in regards to higher education. In the United States, many colleges and universities are developing new programs and other means of promoting diversity in learning and diversity through interactions with people from different racial and ethnic groups. In a study by Jivanjee, Overton, Murray, and Murray (2010) reviewing support for diversity at an Oregon university, researchers found students, faculty, and staff members pushing for greater integration of diversity on campus, as well as social justice and diversity material in the classroom. Past research on this topic has indicated that institutional commitment to campus diversity and diversity issues promotes increased student openness to diverse perspectives (Harper & Yeung 2013). This is an extremely important issue in modern society because of the widespread discrimination still faced by many people of minority race and ethnicity, discrimination that can be found in the interactions and policies that govern life on college campuses. This study will take a closer look at the frequency of academic and extracurricular interactions between students of different races and ethnicities, and their relationship to student attitudes towards campus diversity and diversity programming. Understanding factors related to students' attitudes towards campus diversity would help colleges create more accepting and inclusive campus environments for a racially and ethnically diverse student body.

Past research has shown that interactions with diverse populations can influence attitudes towards minorities and other diverse groups of people. While this study did not take place on a college campus, Hrapczynski and Leslie (2018) found that white parents' racial attitudes and previous interactions with people of different races were

significant predictors in decisions to racially socialize their adopted children, who are of a minority race or ethnicity. These results show how interactions with diverse groups of people can influence people's attitudes toward diversity as a whole. Similarly, studies on LGBTQ diversity on college campuses have shown that more student interaction with gay and lesbian people on campus is related to more accepting attitudes towards gay and lesbian relationships and greater recognition of the importance of having knowledge of gay and lesbian social issues (Sevecke et. al 2015).

Central to understanding attitudes towards diversity is understanding how white students, who are the majority on many campuses, view the cultural shift towards diversification and how they interact with minorities. In a study by Hikido and Murray (2016), researchers analyzed white students attitudes and interactions with campus diversity at their college. They found four central themes describing how white students responded to campus diversity. Students believed that diversity increased tolerance on campus, that diversity led to increased segregation of different ethnic groups, that efforts to diversify a college environment led to ignoring and excluding whites, and that white culture should not be celebrated on campus (Hikido and Murray 2016). This is important for understanding the complexities of attitudes toward diversity.

Similarly, another study by Smith, Senter, and Strachan (2013) looked at the way that college experiences with diversity influenced the level of racial resentment in white students. They found that diversity experiences helped to decrease levels of racial resentment among both males and females. The largest influence on initial attitudes for males was determined to be political ideology. Additionally, there was a strong relationship between attending campus diversity programs and decrease of racial

resentment, particularly in males, although males were more likely to harbor initial resentment than females (Smith et. al 2013). These findings simultaneously demonstrate the influence that engagement with diversity programs and the spreading of information on racial and ethnic diversity can have on students racial attitudes, as well as identify other variables that influence support for diversity.

Past research has also focused on the influence of interracial friendships on student diversity experiences. In a study by Fischer (2008), the researcher examined how different aspects of college, including social distance between ethnic groups, and previous friendship diversity, influenced interracial friendships formed during the first year of college. The results showed that campus diversity influenced friendship heterogeneity, and that as school diversity increased, friendship diversity also increased (Fischer 2008). This article displays the social benefits of campus diversity and shows how interaction with people from different ethnic groups promotes connection and understanding. Relatedly, interracial friendships have also been found to promote the sharing of values and ideas between racial and ethnic groups, as well as increase the likelihood that students will continue to socialize with others of different races and ethnicities (Antonio 2001).

Education on diversity issues, including the spreading of information about diversity and encouragement of intergroup conversations, has also been shown to influence attitudes about the importance of diversity and attitudes towards diverse groups. Different educational approaches that universities take to address diversity and diverse groups play a role in shaping student perspectives towards diversity (Warikoo 2014). Zemba and Billups (2009) found that after completing a diversity education

seminar, students reported increased support for education on diversity issues, as well as greater dissatisfaction with their university's current diversity climate. Research has also provided evidence that campus diversity programming and education increases acceptance of diversity among white students by encouraging interactions with diverse others (Simmons et. al 2010).

Research has also demonstrated some impacts that campus diversity can have on student attitudes. In a study by Santos et. al (2007), researchers analyzed the influence of campus diversity on first-year students and their adjustment to college. Researchers found both positive aspects of diversity interactions, such as belonging and acceptance, multicultural competence, and interethnic connectedness, and negative aspects, such as feelings of ethnic discomfort, discrimination, and interethnic segregation. Results also showed that campus diversity was associated with changing student views on ethnic issues of social justice and inequality (Santos et. al 2007). These results provide evidence for the idea that interethnic interaction can positively influence student attitudes towards campus diversity.

Additionally, frequent interactions with friends of different races and ethnicities, and with campus diversity programs, have been found to promote higher capacities of engagement with racial and cultural differences (Denson & Chang 2009). In a study by Fischer (2011), researchers found that white students who have more contact with people of minority race or ethnicity, through friendship or extracurriculars, report less social distance towards people of other ethnicities, particularly in regards to African Americans. This finding suggests that increased interracial and interethnic contact leads to feelings of connectedness to people of different races and ethnicities. Engagement in

diversity-related organizations and activities has also been linked to the development of critical consciousness among students (Reveles 2017). Critical consciousness refers to the ability to understand and critically analyze social justice inequalities.

This study expands upon past research by looking specifically at the impact of everyday academic and school-sponsored extracurricular interactions rather than that of interracial and interethnic friendships or targeted diversity education programs. The purpose of this study is to analyze how frequency of academic and extracurricular interactions with people of different races and ethnicities influences student attitudes towards campus diversity and diversity programming. Academic and extracurricular interactions include interactions with others of different race and ethnicity at events related to schoolwork or education, including classroom time and group projects, along with outside school sponsored organizations and clubs. With regards to attitudes toward diversity, I assessed student support for campus diversity in general, as well as knowledge of, participation in, and student support for diversity programs active on their campus. I hypothesized that greater frequencies of academic and extracurricular interactions with students of minority racial and ethnic groups would be associated with greater support for campus diversity and greater knowledge of, and participation in, diversity programs. Additionally, I hypothesized that greater frequency of academic and extracurricular interactions with students of minority racial and ethnic groups would related to more positive opinions of diversity programs on campus.

Methods

Research Design

This study used a quantitative survey research design to determine how frequency of academic and extracurricular interactions with people of minority race and ethnicity relates to college student's views of campus diversity and campus diversity programs. Data was collected via questionnaires (Appendix A). Utilizing a survey design allowed for efficient and accurate collection of data on attitudes and personal behavior, and it minimized the potential effects of social desirability bias that come with the study of sensitive topics, such as race, ethnicity, and opinions on diversity. The research study was approved by the University's Institutional Review Board prior to administering the survey. Written questionnaires were handed out in person to increase the likelihood of participants completing all questions, to achieve a high participation rate, and to reduce social desirability bias that could be present in an interview or group-survey process. Questionnaires were given to students to complete individually, and all response information was kept anonymous. Information about the purpose of the study and other information relevant for obtaining informed consent was attached to the questionnaire. Participants' completion of the questionnaire after reading this information served as consent in this study.

Participants

The population of interest in this study is college students. Surveys were given to an availability sample of students from Butler University. In order to improve the external validity of the availability sample, students completed questionnaires individually at

various locations around campus, including academic buildings, different core education classes with approval from professors, the university library, residential buildings, and Greek houses during the spring semester. The majority of participants took the survey in core education classes, which were chosen to provide a wide range of students from different majors, genders, races, and ethnicities. Courses surveyed consisted of two First-Year Seminars, one Analytical Reasoning course, one Texts and Ideas course, one Natural World course, and one Perspectives in the Creative Arts course. The final sample was made up of 150 students from ages 17 - 23 (98 females, 50 males, 1 non-binary/genderqueer, and 1 self-identifying as trans masculine). Participants were from different years in school (65 first-years, 41 sophomores, 22 juniors, 22 seniors) and were of different races and ethnicities (123 Caucasian/White, 11 African American/Black, 7 Hispanic/Latino, 7 Asian, and 2 self-identifying as biracial). Additionally, participants had a wide range of majors from all of the different colleges on campus (18 College of Pharmacy majors, 27 College of Business majors, 14 College of Education majors, 21 College of Communications majors, 15 Jordan College of the Arts majors, 22 Liberal Arts and Sciences (LAS) science or mathematics majors, 11 LAS humanities majors, 19 LAS social science majors, 2 LAS interdisciplinary majors, and 1 exploratory studies major).

Measures

Attitudes toward Campus Diversity Scale. Student attitudes toward campus diversity, the main dependent measure in this study, refers to level of student support for racial and ethnic diversity on campus. I measured this variable using a series of questions

about student opinions towards diversity on campus, including some questions modified from the Attitudes Towards Diversity Scale (Montei et. al, 1996), measuring support for diversity. The Attitudes towards Campus Diversity Scale consisted of six survey items measuring students' attitudes towards diversity on their college campus (α = 0.808, range = 6.00 – 30.00). Students' answers on a five point Likert scale were summed up to create a composite measure of attitudes towards campus diversity. Appropriate items on this scale were reverse coded so that high values represented more positive attitudes toward campus diversity.

Frequency of Academic and Extracurricular Interactions Scale. Diversity interactions in this study refer to the academic and extracurricular interactions that students have with members of racial and ethnic minority groups. I measured diversity interactions, the independent variable in the study, using student responses to questions about the frequency of their interactions with others of different ethnic groups in academic settings and extracurricular activities. These include interactions in the classroom (e.g. group projects or discussions), as well as extracurricular interactions in clubs and organizations on campus. In order to enhance the validity of reported frequencies of interactions, participants were asked to report on their frequency of interactions within a timeframe of the past fall semester. These measures tapped into both the frequency and substance of interactions in order to measure interactions with substance, not merely superficial interactions, as well as overall frequency of academic and extracurricular interactions. Scores on the 10 survey items measuring frequency of academic and extracurricular interactions during the past semester of college were

summed to create one overall Frequency of Academic and Extracurricular Interactions Scale (α = 0.879, range = 10.00 – 50.00), where high numbers signaled greater frequency of academic and extracurricular interactions with racial and ethnic minority students. This scale was also subdivided into two smaller scales for comparison. The first subscale consisted of the three items measuring surface level academic and extracurricular interactions (α = 0.470), such as having a class with a student of minority race or ethnicity. The items on this scale did not hang together as well as the items on the second subscale, and therefore this scale was not used. The second subscale consisted of the other seven items measuring substantive academic and extracurricular interactions (α = 0.885, range = 7.00 – 35.00), such as having a conversation about a class with a student of minority race or ethnicity.

Programming Awareness Scale. Awareness of diversity programs refers to student knowledge of the diversity programs offered on campus. This variable was assessed through questions measuring student level of awareness of major campus diversity programming offered by the university (1 = aware; 0 = unaware). Student overall awareness awareness of campus diversity programs was measured by adding up student scores on each of these questions to create a Programming Awareness Scale (α = 0.726, range = 0.00 – 7.00). Higher values on this scale signaled awareness of a greater number of the major campus diversity programs and groups.

Programming Participation Scale. Student participation in the same seven major campus diversity programs and groups was assessed through questions measuring

student participation in seven major campus diversity programs offered by the university (1 = have participated; 0 = have not participated). Answers to these questions were summed to create recorded in a Programming Participation scale measuring overall student participation since attending the university (α = 0.579, range = 0.00 - 7.00). Participation was defined as attending at least one event or meeting of the program or group in question. Higher scores on this scale indicated participation in a greater number of programs or groups on campus.

Butler Diversity Programming Scale. Participants' attitudes towards, and opinions of, the diversity programming specifically on their campus was also assessed. Attitudes towards Butler's campus diversity programs were analyzed on the Butler Diversity Programming Scale consisting of nine items measuring student attitudes on the current diversity programming at the university (α = 0.705, range = 9.00 – 45.00). Students' answers on a five point Likert scale were summed up to create a composite measure of student attitudes towards Butler's diversity programs. Items on this scale were coded such that higher values signaled greater support for Butler's diversity programs.

Previous Interactions Scale. Previous student diversity interactions outside of campus environment were also measured in order to provide a baseline for previous exposure to racially and ethnically diverse interactions. This scale measuring previous interactions was created by summing up scores on 10 survey items measuring frequency of interactions with people of minority race or ethnicity prior to attending college (α = 0.945,

range = 10.00 – 50.00). Higher scores on the previous interactions scale indicated more interactions with people of minority race and ethnicity prior to attending college.

Current Social Attitudes. Students' general attitudes towards diversity and people of minority race and ethnicity outside of the campus setting were also measured using a series of questions assessing personal opinions on diversity and equality. The Current Social Attitudes Scale consisted of 11 survey items measuring general attitudes towards people of minority race and ethnicity outside of students' campus environment (α = 0.778, range = 11.00 – 55.00). Students' answers on a five point Likert scale were summed up to create a composite measure of current social attitudes. Appropriate items on this scale were reverse coded so that higher numbers corresponded with more positive current social attitudes towards diversity.

Demographics. Additional demographic information was collected for each participant, including gender, race or ethnicity, and their overarching area of study, for example, humanities, social science, science, business, education, communications, and art.

Results

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics for each of the scales can be found in Table 1. The mean on the Attitudes towards Campus Diversity Scale was just over the midpoint, suggesting that students are overall quite supportive of campus diversity (*M* = 23.98, *SD* = 3.96). The standard deviation is relatively large on this scale, which shows that there is some variability in students' level of support for campus diversity. Participants also reported

highly supportive social attitudes towards diversity in general on the Current Social Attitudes Scale (M = 43.77, SD = 4.79). However, the large standard deviation on this scale suggests that there is quite a bit of variability in students' social attitudes towards diversity outside of the campus environment.

On the Frequency of Academic Interactions Scale, students reported moderate to low frequencies of academic interactions with minority race and ethnicity students (M = 28.68, SD = 7.76). Students also reported moderate to low frequencies of substantive academic interactions with racial and ethnic minority students on the Frequency of Substantive Academic Interactions Subscale (M = 19.39, SD = 6.14). On average, on the Previous Interactions Scale, students reported moderate frequencies of interaction with racial and ethnic minority students prior to attending their university, with a high level of deviation (M = 32.67, SD = 11.17).

As can be seen in Table 1, students, on average, reported moderate to low satisfaction with the racial and ethnic makeup of their campus (M = 2.75, SD = 0.99), suggesting that Butler's campus is not diverse enough and that students would like to see an increase in racial and ethnic diversity. Students rated their attitudes towards Butler's diversity programming as moderate, neither highly satisfied nor highly dissatisfied (M = 28.80, SD = 4.85). However, despite moderate attitudes towards diversity programming, students reported low diversity programming awareness (M = 2.82, SD = 1.94) and extremely low participation in diversity programming (M = 0.55, SD = 0.96). The Efroymson Diversity Center had the highest levels of both awareness and participation among surveyed students at 75.3% and 26.0% respectively. Black Student Union had the second highest awareness and participation levels among students, with

a 63.3% awareness rate and a 10.0% participation rate. All other major programs had awareness rates of below 50%, with Dawg Days Diversity Program coming in third at 44.7% awareness among students and Asian Culture Enthusiasts reporting the lowest rate of awareness at 18.7%. With regards to student participation, CORE Social Justice and Diversity courses reported the third highest rate of participation at 6.7%, and South Asian Student Association reported the lowest rates of student participation at 1.3%.

Correlational Results

Table 2 displays the relationships between each of the key variable in this study. Neither frequency of academic interactions with minorities (r = +0.025, p = 0.764) nor frequency of substantive academic interactions (r = +0.046, p = 0.578) were significantly correlated with student attitudes towards campus diversity, suggesting that, there is no significant relationship between frequency of academic interactions with racial and ethnic minority students and student attitudes towards campus diversity.

Student attitudes towards campus diversity were, as expected, highly positively correlated with current social attitudes (r = +0.749, p <.000). Students with more supportive attitudes towards campus diversity were more likely to have positive general social attitudes towards diversity. There was also a strong relationship between attitudes towards campus diversity and overall satisfaction with racial and ethnic makeup of campus. In this case, more positive attitudes towards campus diversity were related to less overall satisfaction with the university's racial and ethnic makeup (r = -0.556, p < .000). More positive attitudes towards campus diversity were also moderately correlated with greater frequency of previous experiences with people of

racial and ethnic minority prior to attending college (r = +0.298, p < .000), greater student awareness of diversity programs on campus (r = +0.341, p < .000), and greater student participation in diversity programs on campus (r = +0.301, p = <.000). Students with more positive attitudes towards campus diversity were also found to have positive attitudes towards Butler's diversity programming (r = +0.192, p = .019).

Overall frequency of academic interactions with students of minority race or ethnicity (r = +0.166, p = .042) and frequency of substantive interactions (r = +0.171, p = .037) were both weakly correlated with student awareness of campus diversity programming. Students with greater diversity program awareness were also more likely to have more positive current social attitudes towards diversity (r = +0.297, p < .000), as well as greater overall satisfaction with the racial and ethnic makeup of the university (r = +0.289, p < .000). Awareness of diversity programming was also highly correlated with student participation in diversity programming (r = +0.575, p < .000), such that students with greater program awareness were more likely to participate in diversity programs.

In addition to attitudes toward campus diversity and awareness of diversity programming, students with greater participation in diversity programming were more likely to have had greater frequencies of academic interactions with minority race and ethnicity students (r = +0.310, p < .000), greater frequencies of substantive interactions (r = +0.308, p < .000), greater frequencies of previous experiences with people of minority race or ethnicity (r = +0.300, p < .000), and more positive current social attitudes (r = +0.285, p < .000). There was also a moderate negative correlation between student participation in diversity programming and overall satisfaction with the

university's racial and ethnic makeup (r = -0.281, p < .000), such that greater participation in programming suggested lower levels of satisfaction.

Student attitudes towards Butler's diversity programming was found to be moderately correlated with both overall frequency of academic and extracurricular interactions with students of minority race or ethnicity (r = +0.317, p < .000) and frequency of substantive interactions (r = +0.293, p < .000). This suggests that students with greater frequencies of interactions with minority students had more positive attitudes towards Butler's diversity programs. There was also a moderate positive correlation between attitudes towards diversity programs and overall satisfaction with the racial and ethnic makeup of the university (r = +0.327, p < .000).

Table 3 shows the correlation data between each variable index and the demographic variables collected in this study. Some of these variables, such as gender and race/ethnicity, were dummied for analysis purposes. Gender was moderately correlated with attitudes towards campus diversity, such that females were more likely to have positive attitudes towards campus diversity (r = +0.343, p < .000). Females also were less likely to be satisfied with the racial and ethnic makeup of the university (r = -0.203, p = .013) and were more likely to have positive attitudes towards the university's diversity programming (r = +0.181, p = .028), although the later could be the result of the greater proportion of females in the sample.

Race and ethnicity were also correlated with certain scales (Table 3). Students who identified as white or caucasian, labeled as the "majority", showed no significant correlation with attitudes towards campus diversity. Majority students were more likely to have lower frequencies of substantive interactions with students of minority race or

ethnicity (r = -0.211, p = .010), lower frequencies of previous interactions with people of the racial and ethnic minority before college (r = -0.441, p < .000), less awareness of diversity programming (r = -0.250, p = .002), and less participation in diversity programming (r = -0.331, p < .000). Students who identified as black or African American were more likely to hold positive attitudes towards campus diversity (r = +0.235, p = .004) and greater awareness of diversity programming (r = +0.238, p = .003). Black students were also more likely to have higher levels of participation in diversity programming (r = +0.347, p < .000) and less satisfaction with the overall racial and ethnic makeup of the university (r = -0.267, p = .001).

Students' year in school was moderately positively correlated with attitudes towards campus diversity (r = +0.236, p = .004). Students with a greater number of years in college were more likely to have greater awareness of diversity programming (r = +0.358, p < .000), less positive attitudes towards Butler's diversity programming (r = -0.260, p = .001), and less overall satisfaction with the racial and ethnic makeup of campus (r = -0.368, p < .000). Age was weakly positively correlated with attitudes towards campus diversity (r = +0.175, p = .032). Older students were found to be moderately associated with greater awareness of diversity programming (r = +0.342, p < .000), less supportive attitudes towards Butler's diversity programs (r = -0.253, p = .002), and less satisfaction with the racial and ethnic makeup of campus (r = -0.315, p < .000).

Regression Results

Table 4 shows the results of linear regression used to determine the standardized relationship between attitudes towards campus diversity and each of the main variable indices and demographic variables when controlled for all other variables. Current social attitudes ($\beta = 0.585$, $p < .000$), female gender ($\beta = 0.201$, $p = .001$), and frequency of previous experiences with people of minority race or ethnicity prior to college ($\beta = 0.138$, $p = .050$) were all significantly related to attitudes towards campus diversity when controlling for all other variables. Students with more supportive attitudes towards campus diversity were more likely to have more positive current social attitudes towards diversity, have greater frequency of previous experiences with minorities, and be female. Frequency of academic and extracurricular interactions with students of minority race or ethnicity was almost significant ($\beta = -0.052$, $p = .068$), which could be the result of insufficient power due to small sample size.

Another linear regression was run looking at the standardized relationship between the main variable indices and demographics and student participation in diversity programming (Table 5). Awareness of diversity programming ($\beta = 0.507$, $p < .000$), student age ($\beta = -0.316$, $p = .030$), and frequency of academic and extracurricular interactions with students of minority race or ethnicity ($\beta = 0.155$, $p = .046$) were all significantly related to participation in diversity programming when controlling for all other variables. Students who were more aware of diversity programs, students who were older, and those with a greater frequency of academic and extracurricular interactions with minority students were more likely to participate.

Table 6 shows a final regression run to determine the standardized relationship between student attitudes towards Butler's diversity programming and all other

variables. Frequency of academic and extracurricular interactions with students of minority race or ethnicity was significantly related to student attitudes towards Butler's diversity programs (β = 0.384, p < .000) when controlling for all other demographic variables and variable indices, including previous interactions with people of minority race and ethnicity prior to college. Students who had a greater frequency of academic and extracurricular interactions with minority students were more likely to have positive attitudes towards Butler's diversity programs. Both gender (β = 0.143, p = .087) and year in school (β = -0.313, p = .076) were close to showing significant relationships with attitudes towards Butler's diversity programs as well.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between frequency of academic and extracurricular diversity interactions and student attitudes towards campus diversity and diversity programs. Contrary to the central hypothesis of this study, the bivariate relationship was not significant. However, once I controlled for current social attitudes, the relationship between frequency of academic and extracurricular diversity interactions and attitudes towards campus diversity was close to significant. Sample size may have been a limitation on this finding, as the current sample may have been too small, with too little power to pick up on this relationship. Similar future studies should look to increase sample size in order to further analyze this relationship. However, even if significant, the standardized relationship between frequency of interactions and attitudes towards diversity was very weak. Other variables had a much stronger relationship with attitudes towards campus diversity. Student

attitudes towards campus diversity were most strongly related to current social attitudes, such that more positive social attitudes towards diversity are related to more positive attitudes towards campus diversity.

On the other hand, the strong relationship between frequency of academic and extracurricular interactions with racial and ethnic minority students and both awareness of and participation in diversity programming on campus is consistent with my hypothesis. These results support the idea that greater frequency of academic and extracurricular interactions with minority students is related to increased knowledge of diversity programs as well as participation in these programs. Additionally, findings on student attitudes towards Butler's diversity programming were consistent with my hypothesis that more positive attitudes towards the university's diversity programming were related to greater frequency of academic and extracurricular interactions with minority students.

Looking at patterns in participant demographics, females were found more likely to have positive attitudes towards campus diversity than males. Additionally, older students were found to be less supportive of Butler's diversity programming as well as less satisfied with the racial and ethnic makeup of campus. This seems like a contradiction, however, this finding could be a result of older students becoming more critical of the university's programs and their effectiveness.

As expected, students in the white majority had much lower rates of academic and extracurricular interactions with minorities and were much more likely to be unaware of diversity programs on campus and to not participate in these programs. White students also had much lower rates of engagement in diversity programming,

which may be because they are not the intended targets for many of these diversity groups. However, these results highlight areas for improvement in school-sponsored programming, as well as the population that the university needs to target in order encourage diversity and diversity initiatives on campus. White students are the vast majority of the campus population at Butler, and they are not actively engaging with and participating in diversity initiatives.

There are a few limitations present in this study. First, the use of an availability sample, although the most practical choice in this type of study, limited external validity and prevents findings from being truly representative of the total population of college students on the university's campus. However, by distributing the survey in multiple different locations, including a wide range of core education courses in which all students are required to participate, I was able to improve external validity of the data. Another limitation and avenue for further study is the lack of time-order mechanism used in this study. I found many significant relationships between attitudes towards diversity, frequency of interactions, support for Butler's programming, and participation in diversity programming, however, without including a mechanism to measure the direction of the relationship, I was unable to determine any type of causality. Future studies should look at longitudinal changes in students over the course of their college experience, or include more specific questions about when variables, such as interactions with minority students and participation in programming, occurred in relation to others.

Additionally, attitudes towards racial and ethnic diversity is a sensitive topic in society today, which could have potentially influenced results by increasing reported

support for diversity, even though precautions, such as anonymous surveys and neutrally worded questions, were taken in attempt to reduce social desirability bias. Furthermore, the proportion of diverse students attending Butler University used in this study may also present a problem. The university has a significantly smaller population of racial and ethnic minority students, and although the percentages of minority participants were similar to the percentage of minority students in the population, the small proportion of minorities on campus could influence the frequency of academic and extracurricular experiences that white students are able to have with members of these groups.

Due to the small population of minorities in the sample, I was not able to run any separate analyses on the attitudes of different minority racial and ethnic groups towards campus diversity. Future studies could focus on the attitudes of different minority groups on campus in order to understand their perspectives on campus diversity, as well as their attitudes towards the diversity programming available. Also, looking at past research, there were many other variables seen to influence attitudes towards diversity, including political ideology (Smith et. al 2013) and previous friendships with people of different race or ethnicity (Fischer 2011) that were not included in this study's focus on academic interactions. Future studies could control for these variables in order to see if there is a continued relationship between frequency of academic and extracurricular diversity interactions and student attitudes toward Butler's diversity programming.

The results of this study have implications for the promotion of diversity on college campuses. As universities are evolving and becoming increasingly diverse, it is important to understand what factors increase support for and understanding of the

benefits of campus diversity in order to develop a more inclusive and tolerant campus environment for students of all race and ethnicities. I hypothesized that higher frequency of academic and extracurricular interactions with members of racial and ethnic minority groups would be related to increase support for campus diversity and diversity programming, as well as increase awareness and participation in diversity programs. Results showed that student attitudes towards campus diversity are most closely related to current social attitudes towards diversity issues. However, frequency of academic and extracurricular interactions with student of minority race or ethnicity was significantly related to student attitudes towards Butler's diversity programming, as well as student awareness of, and participation in, diversity programming. This suggests that increasing venues for academic and extracurricular interaction between members of different racial and ethnic groups on university campuses could help to promote positive attitudes towards, and greater participation in, campus diversity programs.

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Table 1: *Descriptive statistics on key indices (N = 150).*

Variable	Mean	Median	SD	Min	Max
Attitudes towards Diversity	23.98	24.50	3.96	11.00	30.00
Freq. of Academic Interactions	28.68	28.50	7.76	14.00	50.00
Substantive Interactions	19.39	19.00	6.15	8.00	35.00
Current Social Attitudes	43.77	44.00	4.79	27.00	52.00
Freq. of Previous Interactions	32.67	34.00	11.17	10.00	50.00
Program Awareness	2.82	3.00	1.94	0.00	7.00
Program Participation	0.55	0.00	0.96	0.00	5.00
Attitudes towards Butler Programs	28.80	29.00	4.84	15.00	41.00
Satisfaction w/ campus racial/ ethnic makeup	2.75	3.00	0.99	1.00	5.00

Table 2: *Correlational results for all key indices (N = 150).*

	Attitudes towards Diversity	Freq. Academic Interactions	Substantive Interactions	Current Social Attitudes	Freq. Previous Interactions	Program Awareness	Program Participation	Attitude toward BU Programs	Overall Satisfaction
Attitudes Towards Diversity	1								
Freq. Academic Interactions	.025	1							
Substantive Interactions	.046	.975**	1						
Current Social Attitudes	.749**	.069	.083	1					
Freq. Previous Interactions	.298**	.414**	.452**	.290**	1				
Program Awareness	.341**	.166*	.171*	.297**	.066	1			
Program Participation	.303**	.310**	.308**	.285**	.300**	.575**	1		
Attitudes towards BU Programs	.192*	.317**	.293**	.210**	.111	.014	.060	1	
Overall Satisfaction	-.556**	.113	.072	-.421**	-.197*	-.289**	-.281**	.327**	1

Table shows the correlation coefficients for each of the key indices. Marked correlations are significant at α = .01 (**) and α = .05 (*).

Table 3. *Correlational results for demographic variables.*

Variable	Age	Female	Male	Majority (Caucasian/White)	African American/Black	Year in School
Attitudes towards Diversity	.175*	.343**	-.315**	-.139	.235**	.236**
Freq. of Academic Interactions	-.063	-.032	.038	-.172*	.048	-.042
Substantive Interactions	-.050	-.056	.063	-.211**	.090	-.026
Current Social Attitudes	.138	.193*	-.170*	-.081	.142	.186*
Freq. Previous interactions	-.141	.030	-.024	-.441**	.254**	-.129
Programming Awareness	.342**	.137	-.139	-.250**	.238**	.358**
Programming Participation	.085	.020	-.020	-.331**	.347**	.158
Attitudes towards BU Programs	-.253**	.181*	-.152	-.019	-.078	-.260**
Overall Satisfaction	-.315**	-.203*	.191*	.059	-.267**	-.368**

Table shows the correlation coefficients between key indices and each demographic variable. Marked correlations are significant at a = .01 (**) and a = .05 (*).

Table 4: *Linear regression predicting attitudes towards diversity (N = 150).*

Variable	Beta (β)	Sig.	SE
Gender	.201	.001	.464
Majority/Minority	-.052	.420	.631
Age	-.026	.834	.389
Year in School	.148	.241	.448
Current Social Attitudes	.585	.000	.051
Freq. of Previous Interactions	.138	.050	.024
Program Awareness	.068	.241	.144
Program Participation	.047	.511	.283
Attitudes towards BU Programs	.066	.277	.050
Freq. of Academic Interactions	-.188	.068	.032

The table shows the results of a linear regression with Attitudes toward Diversity Scale as the DV against all other variables. Alpha (a) = .05 marks the significance level for the results.

Table 5: *Linear regression predicting participation in diversity programming (N = 150).*

Variable	Beta (β)	Sig.	SE
Gender	-.081	.261	.145
Majority/Minority	-.089	.246	.190
Age	-.316	.033	.115
Year in School	.255	.092	.134
Current Social Attitudes	.041	.668	.020
Freq. of Previous Interactions	.125	.140	.007
Program Awareness	.507	.000	.038
Attitudes towards Campus Diversity	.067	.511	.026
Attitudes towards BU Programs	-.031	.669	.015
Freq. of Academic Interactions	.155	.046	.010

The table shows the results of a linear regression with Programming Participation Scale as the DV against all other variables. Alpha (α) = .05 marks the significance level for the results.

Table 6: *Linear regression predicting attitudes towards Butler's diversity programming (N = 150).*

Variable	Beta (β)	Sig.	SE
Gender	.143	.087	.822
Majority/Minority	-.013	.886	1.086
Age	-.003	.988	.667
Year in School	-.313	.076	.764
Current Social Attitudes	.134	.229	.113
Freq. of Previous Interactions	-.176	.075	.041
Program Awareness	-.009	.927	.248
Program Participation	-.043	.669	.487
Attitudes towards Campus Diversity	.130	.277	.146
Freq. of Academic Interactions	.384	.000	.052

The table shows the results of a linear regression with Butler's Diversity Programming Scale as the DV against all other variables. Alpha (α) = .05 marks the significance level for the results.

Appendix A:

Study Information Sheet
Interaction Frequency and Student Attitudes towards Campus Diversity

The purpose of this study is to assess frequency of student interactions with people of minority racial and ethnic groups and student social attitudes towards diversity.

Content and Procedure:

The study requires you to complete a questionnaire about your academic interactions and social attitudes. The results of this survey will be used in one or more scholarly reports, but all information gathered from the questionnaire will be completely anonymous. This survey should take about 10 minutes to complete. Approximately 200 students will be asked to complete this questionnaire.

Participation:

You must be at least 18 years of age to participate in this study. Your participation is completely voluntary and you may withdraw at any time without penalty. If you choose to withdraw prior to the completion of this questionnaire, your data will be returned to you or destroyed. In accordance with Butler's Institutional Review Board guidelines, by completing this questionnaire, you have shown your consent to participate in this study and have your anonymous information used for scholarly purposes.

Confidentiality:

Your participation in this study, along with any data you provide, will be kept completely anonymous. **Please do not put your name on this survey.**

Contact:

If you have any questions or concerns about this study please contact Dr. Katherine Novak in the Department of Sociology and Criminology (kbnovak@butler.edu).

For the purposes of this study, "racial and ethnic minority groups" refer to racially and ethnically based groups of people who experience relative disadvantage in society compared to members of a dominant racial group. Examples include, but are not limited to, African Americans, Latinos, and Asians.

Directions: Please answer each of the following questions as honestly as possible by either circling your answer or placing the number that corresponds with your answer in the blank provided. Remember that all information will be kept strictly anonymous.

1.**Please indicate the extent to which you are satisfied or dissatisfied with the overall racial and ethnic makeup of Butler's campus?** (Please circle your answer)

       1= Very Dissatisfied   2= Dissatisfied 3= Neutral 4= Satisfied 5= Very Satisfied

2. Please answer the following questions about your experiences at Butler University. **Indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements by placing the appropriate number in the space provided.**

During the past semester at Butler, how often have you engaged in the following activities:

       1= Never 2= Seldom 3= Sometimes 4= Often 5= Very Often

___ Been in a class with someone from a minority racial or ethnic group.
___ Attended an academic talk with someone from a minority racial or ethnic group.
___ Participated in a student organization with someone from a minority racial or ethnic group.
___ Worked on a class project with someone from a minority racial or ethnic group.
___ Studied/Prepared for a class with someone of a minority racial or ethnic group.
___ Participated in a discussion during class with someone from a minority racial or ethnic group.
___ Worked on homework outside of class with someone from a minority racial or ethnic group.
___ Had a conversation about a class with someone from a minority racial or ethnic group.
___ Had a conversation about a student organization with someone from a minority racial or ethnic group.
___ Had an academic discussion with someone of a minority race or ethnicity.

3. Please answer the following questions thinking about your experiences prior to attending Butler University. **Indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements by placing the appropriate number in the space provided:**

1= Strongly Disagree   2= Disagree 3= Neutral 4= Agree 5= Strongly Agree

____ In high school, I had close friends of different races and ethnicities.

____ In high school, I regularly interacted with people of minority races or ethnicities at school.

____ In high school, I regularly had meaningful conversations with people of minority race or ethnicity.

____ In high school, I regularly interacted with people of minority race or ethnicity in extracurricular activities.

____ In high school, I was a member of extracurricular activities with people of minority race or ethnicity.

____ Prior to coming to Butler, I regularly spent time with people of minority race or ethnicity.

____ Prior to coming to Butler, I regularly interacted with people of minority race or ethnicity in my free time.

____ Prior to coming to Butler, I regularly interacted with people of minority race or ethnicity at a job.

____ Prior to coming to Butler, I regularly interacted with family friends who are of minority race or ethnicity.

____ Prior to coming to Butler, I regularly interacted with people of minority race or ethnicity in my neighborhood.

4. Please answer the following questions thinking about your personal attitudes. **Indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements by placing the appropriate number in the space provided:**

1= Strongly Disagree   2= Disagree 3= Neutral 4= Agree 5= Strongly Agree

____ I feel comfortable around students who are a different race or ethnicity than me.

____ I feel that racial and ethnic diversity is good for Butler.

____ I feel comfortable around students who are racist.

____ I would feel just as comfortable working on schoolwork with someone of racial or ethnic minority as I would with someone of my same race.

____ Students who are members of minority groups on campus have the same qualities as students who are white.

____ I feel that Butler's campus is racially and ethnically diverse.

____ We would have a better campus environment if more students were members of the racial and ethnic minority.

____ I feel that increasing the number of racial and ethnic minority students would be beneficial to Butler.

____ I feel that focusing on campus diversity puts too much emphasis on the differences between racial and ethnic groups.

____ Butler's emphasis on diversity makes me feel like I cannot express my feelings on racial and ethnic issues.

___ I support racial and ethnic diversity in schools.
___ Racism is a problem in society today.
___ I think that white people have advantages because of the color of their skin.
___ I support programs that increase diversity.
___ I think that people of minority race and ethnicity have advantages because of the color of their skin.
___ I feel uncomfortable spending time with people of a minority race or ethnicity.
___ I feel that racial and ethnic diversity in schools is an important social issue.
___ I feel that racial and ethnic minorities do not have the same opportunities as white people.

5. Please answer the following questions about diversity programs at Butler University.

Indicate which of the following groups or programs on campus that you were aware of prior to this survey (check all that apply):

___ CORE Social Justice and Diversity classes
___ Dawg Days Diversity Program
___ Efroymson Diversity Center
___ Asian Culture Enthusiasts
___ Black Student Union
___ Latinos Unidos
___ South Asian Student Association
___ Other, please specify:_____

Please indicate which of the following groups you have participated in (e.g. attended meetings or events) (check all that apply):

___ CORE Social Justice and Diversity classes
___ Dawg Days Diversity
___ Efroymson Diversity Center
___ Asian Culture Enthusiasts
___ Black Student Union
___ Latinos Unidos
___ South Asian Student Association
___ Other, please specify:_____

Please rate your agreement with the following statements concerning Butler's campus diversity programs:

1= Strongly Disagree   2= Disagree 3= Neutral 4= Agree 5= Strongly Agree

___Butler is committed to campus diversity.

___ Butler's diversity programs are effective in promoting campus diversity.

___ Butler students are aware of the diversity programs and diversity student associations offered on campus.

___ Butler's diversity programs promote participation from students of all races and ethnicities.

___ Butler's diversity programs help students understand the perspectives of people of minority race or ethnicity.

___ Butler's diversity programs encourage interactions between people of different races and ethnicities.

___Butler's diversity programs are necessary to promote an inclusive campus environment.

___ Butler needs more diversity programming.

6. Please answer the following questions about yourself. **Indicate your response to the following questions by filling in the appropriate information or placing a checkmark by the appropriate answer:**

Age: _____

Year in School:
___ First Year ___ Sophomore ___ Junior ___ Senior ___ Graduate Student

With which race or ethnicity do you identify?
___ African American/Black
___ Caucasian/White
___ Hispanic/Latin
___ Asian
___ Native American
___ Pacific Islander
___ Arab/Middle Eastern
___ Prefer to self-describe: _____
___ Prefer not to answer

Gender/Gender Identity:
___ Female
___ Male
___ Non-binary/Genderqueer
___ Prefer to self-describe:_____

Which of the following best represents your primary area of study at Butler?
___ College of Pharmacy
___ College of Business
___ College of Education
___ College of Communications

___ Jordan College of the Arts

___ LAS Science or mathematics

___ LAS Humanities

___ LAS Social Science

___ LAS Interdisciplinary

___ Other, please specify:_____

Thank you for your participation!