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#### Predictors of Stress in Minority Students: The Relative Importance of Optimism Vs Resilience

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#### PREDICTORS OF STRESS IN MINORITY STUDENTS: THE RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF OPTIMISM VS RESILIENCE

Rashelle Sanchez & Ho Huynh



Presenting at Student Research Symposium 2023



# Introduction

- Fall 2020 40.3% of College students reported that stress negatively impacted their grades <sup>1</sup>
- Groups at higher risk to experience stress are FGCS, low SES, and minority groups.

<sup>4 (</sup>American College Health Association, 2020)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>(Huynh, et al., 2021)

# **Stress**



- ☐ Influences of Stress: academic pressures, money management, schedules, work pressure, family relation, and social life <sup>1</sup>
- ☐ The Transaction Theory of Stress <sup>2</sup>

☐ Outcomes of Student Stress: cardiovascular and respiratory disease, stomach issues, memory issues, depression, anxiety, and poor academic performance <sup>3</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>(Helmbrecht & Ayars, 2021; Huynh, et al., 2021)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> (Freligh & Debb, 2019)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>(Sukup & Clayton, 2021)

# Four subcategories of student stress: Each category examines different areas where stress may be experienced <sup>1</sup>

- Perception of workload
- Time Restraint
- Academic Self-Perception
- Perceived pressure to perform

# PREDICTORS OF STRESS

## Resilience

 The ability for an individual to continuously adapt to situations and bounce back from adversities experienced, considered a flexible trait <sup>1</sup>

 Influenced by background, socioeconomic status, familial beliefs, and learned behaviors from others around <sup>2</sup>

■ Past studies show those with higher resilience better adapt, are more successful, less likely hood of burnout and display higher levels of mindfulness <sup>3</sup>

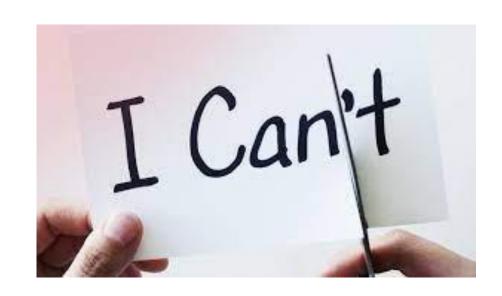
<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>(Sukup & Clayton, 2021)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>(Sukup & Clayton, 2021)

<sup>3(</sup>Freligh & Debb, 2019)

# **Optimism**

- The ability for a person to expect a good outcome in their current situation <sup>1</sup>
- Influenced by their environment, socioeconomic status, relation with others, and genetic influences <sup>2</sup>
- Past studies show those with higher levels of optimism report lower stress levels, and higher levels of motivation <sup>3</sup>



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>(Forgeard & Seligman, 2012)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>(Foregard & Seligman, 2012)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>(Baumgartner, et. Al., 2018)



# **HYPOTHESIS**

Hypothesis 1: Resilience and optimism will both be negatively correlated to stress

Hypothesis 2: Resilience will be a better predictor of stress than optimism in all four subcategories of student stress

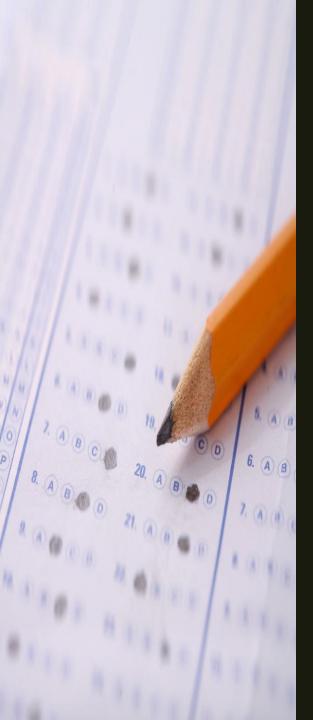
# METHODS



#### **Participants:**

-355 first year students completed an online survey at a public regional university where the minority groups are the majority of students.

- 72.4% identified as Latinx, 59.7% were FGCS, and on a subjective scale of SES from 1-10, mean response was 5.76 (SD = 1.56)



#### Measures:

-Revised Life Orientation Test to measure optimism<sup>1</sup>

-Connor-Davidson
Resilience Scale 25 to
measure resilience<sup>2</sup>

-Perception of Academic Stress to measure stress<sup>3</sup>

#### **Analysis Plan:**

-Bivariate correlations

-Linear regression tests

<sup>1</sup>(LOT-R; Scheirer, M. F., et. al., 1994) <sup>2</sup>(CD-RISC-25; Connor & Davidson, 2018)

<sup>3</sup>(PAS; Bedewy & Gabriel, 2015)

# Results

- Found to be negatively correlated with all four sub-scales of student stress
- $\triangleright$  Resilience (rs from -.23 to -.54, ps < .001)
- $\triangleright$  Optimism (rs from -.20 to -.40, ps < .001)

## Results

- Resilience was a better predictor of (Beta resilience, p value resilience; Beta optimism, p value optimism)
- $\triangleright$  perception of workload (-.19, p = .003; -.12, p = .054)
- $\triangleright$  academic self-perceptions, (-.47, p < .001; -.19, p < .001).

- Optimism was a better predictor of stress of
- > pressure to perform, (-.14, p = .03; -.15, p = .02)
- $\triangleright$  time restraints (-.14, p = .02, -.23, p < .001).



## Discussion

- Optimism acts a motivator, which leads to decrease in stress
- Resilience reduces burn out, increases mindfulness, and adaptability.
- ☐ Perception of workload and academic self-perception involve their self-views, which can reflect mindfulness related to resilience
- Pressure to perform and time restraint groups involve more direct goals, which relate to the motivation within optimism.

## **Limitations and Future Directions**

#### **Limitation:**

Sample makeup



#### **Future directions:**

Other minority groups, comparative groups, and environmental factors

# CONCLUSION

- ☐ The results demonstrate different ways optimism and resilience can influence different areas of stress.
- ☐ Courses and teaching styles can be implemented to facilitate characteristics related to optimism and resilience.



# THANK YOU

Questions?

## Select References

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