"Stress, Resilience, and Achievement Motivation among College Students"

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ABSTRACT: Scope and Method of Study: The scope of this study was limited to students at Patna University who chose to participate. The purpose was to examine the relationship between stress, resilience, and achievement motivation in relation to family structure and racial/ethnic status. Participants answered five separate measures, one measure for stress, one measure for resilience, two measures of achievement motivation, and a general information form. A sample of 186 students volunteered to participate. Independent sample T tests and an ANOVA were used to examine stress, resilience, and achievement motivation in relation to the home environment, racial/ethnic status, and the home environment. In addition to T tests, Pearson correlations were used to examine the associations amongst the family structure for under-represented students.

Findings and Conclusions: There was a positive relationship between achievement motivation and self-reported levels of GPA in regard to the intact home and racial/ethnic status. There was not a relation between resilience, stress, and achieving tendency in regards to the intact home and racial and ethnic status. Furthermore, there was a negative relationship between racial/ethnic status and cumulative GPA's.

Key words: Stress, Resilience, Achievement Motivation, Intact household, non intact household, underrepresented students, Represented students, Bihar, Patna.

I.   INTRODUCTION

Over half of all students who entered higher education will fail to complete a bachelor's level degree. Lower rates of attainment among the general college student population include troubling racial and ethnic inequalities in college student graduation rates. Researchers attribute low educational attainment to the effects of an individual's demographic background and its contribution to stress in higher educational settings. In spite of racial/ethnic underrepresented students entering college at higher rates in comparison to past decades, many racial/ethnic under-represented students continue to graduate at distinctly lower rates than their majority counterparts.

While one-third of the majority racial/ethnic background students do not complete their bachelor's degrees within a six-year time frame, one half of students from the underrepresented background do not complete a college level degree in any form.

Household family structure also affects college graduation rates. College students today have had less of an opportunity to grow up in an intact household, defined as a household populated by both biological parents. Students who were born during the 1980's or 1990's have a 50 % chance of living in a non-intact household at some point before entering higher education. Research affirms students from the non-intact home may have fewer resources than their intact counterparts in preparing for the college setting. While researchers have focused on students of the racial/ethnic underrepresented background and students from non-intact households, Baldwin et. al (2003) stated it is important to focus on students who may come from both demographic backgrounds concomitantly. Researchers also illuminate that racial/ethnic under-represented students come from intact households at higher rates than racial/ethnic majority students.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

While researchers have devoted much attention to the shortcomings and negative outcomes of students from racial/ethnic minority backgrounds and/or from non-intact households, few have looked at factors that may contribute to why students from these non-traditional backgrounds succeed. Hartley argues that although the environmental demands related to these demographic backgrounds are exceedingly stressful, students from these environments often demonstrate a high level of ability, creativity and commitment to academic persistence. Hartley

states students from these underrepresented backgrounds often demonstrate high levels of interpersonal resilience and high levels of achievement. The situations these students face are often analogous to the "half-full, half-empty" glass depiction. A preponderance of research focuses on the "half-empty" aspect of the glass when assessing these students. However, the characteristics and qualities consist of resilience and achievement motivation. These qualities assist the student from a non-intact household and or underrepresented racial background in succeeding in the academic and professional environment. The lack of information on racial/ethnic minority students from non-intact households begs the question: how and why do some of these students thrive?

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY
Data collected at Patna College of Patna University during the academic school year of 2019-2020 was analyzed to examine perceived academic achievement, resiliency, achievement motivation, and stresses among college students. More specifically, these factors were analyzed in college students from non-intact households and those with racial/ethnic minority backgrounds compared to majority students from intact, two-parent family households. Relationships between these factors such as resilience and achievement motivation which may help students who are from non-intact households, low socioeconomic status and/or of racial/ethnic minority backgrounds overcome additional stressors in college were explored. The analysis of this data adds to information on possible strengths such students have to succeed in higher education in spite of multiple obstacles and stresses.

DEFINITION OF TERMS
Non-intact/disrupted households: The term single-parent/non-intact households is defined as households where parents may be separated, divorced, or never married, and the household may contain other related adults such as grandparents, or it may contain unrelated adults, as in cohabitation. VerPloeg (2002) coined the term disrupted families, defined as single-parent family/non-intact household. In this paper I use the term non-intact household, rather than single-parent family/non-intact household because it is more inclusive. Non-intact families are more likely to be characterized by multiple family transitions than by long-term stability. Thus, the term "disrupted" stresses this instability, and interruptions of the non-intact household's daily life.

Intact household: The term intact household will be used to describe students who were raised in the same two-parent/legal guardian home throughout childhood and adolescence. The term intact will be used as not all children were born into the traditional nuclear family household of the biological mother and father. This term will be utilized in that not all cultures operate under the traditional nuclear family system of both biological parents in the household.

An underrepresented student racial background consists of students who come from different parts of Bihar. Researchers have found students from these racial/ethnic backgrounds are often underrepresented in higher education institutions, specifically predominantly Central institutions. Furthermore, statistics show that students of the underrepresented racial/ethnic background often enter the college setting with fewer means to prepare them (e.g., emotional and financial) for the rigorous stressors of higher education. The term under-represented is used because these students make up less than the majority of their represented counterparts even though students from this population are steadily entering higher education settings.

Represented students: Students with India, Bihar, Northern, Middle East racial/ethnic statuses are labeled as represented students in the current study. Students of these racial backgrounds will be considered represented because these students consistently achieve in higher education settings.

Stress: The concept of stress can be rather vague, and for many scientific professionals, it lacks clear definition. Hess and Copeland (2006) state there have been two prevailing definitions of stress. The first definition given is environmental circumstances or conditions that threaten, challenge, exceed, or harm psychological or biological capacities of the individual. Lazarus and Folk man's model, which views stress as a relationship between environmental events or conditions and the individual's cognitive appraisals of the degree and type of challenge, threat, harm, or loss (Hess & Copeland, 2006). While Lazarus and Folk man's model has been widely used, it is now receiving much criticism and questioning.

Stress may be defined as it is the body's reaction to a change that requires a physical, mental or emotional adjustment or response. Stress can be positive or negative, stress can be positive when the situation offers an opportunity for a person to gain something. It acts as a motivator for peak performance. Stress can be negative when a person faces social, physical, organizational and emotional problems. Stress can come from any situation or

thought that makes you feel frustrated, angry, nervous or anxious. Stress can be defined as a state that results from a transaction between you and the things around you.

Resilience: The most common definition of resilience is the ability to bounce back, resist illness, and adapt to stress or thrive in the face of adversity. Resilience is the psychological quality that allows some people to be knocked down by the adversities of life and come back at least as strong as before. Rather than letting difficulties, traumatic events, or failure overcome them and drain their resolve, highly resilient people find a way to change course, emotionally heal, and continue moving toward their goals.

Achievement motivation: Achievement motivation refers to an individual's desire for accomplishment, mastering of skills, and high standards. Achievement motivation is a new concept in the field of Psychology. David Mc Cleland (1961) at Harvard University worked in this field. He tried to measure high need for achievement (n-Ach). Mc Cleland measured n-Ach using the Thematic Apperception Test (TAT). He counted the amount of achievement imagery in the respondent. He concluded Achievement motivation leads people to set realistic put challenging goals. Achievement motivated people are not gamblers and do not like leaving things to chance Gamblers prefer big risks because they can rationalize away failure as being outside their control, conservatives prefer small risks with guaranteed gains and no blame. Only achievement motivated people take the middle ground of challenge and moderate risk where their skills will affect the outcome.

II. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Question 1: Will there be a difference in scores of stress, resilience, achievement motivation, and grade point average based on self-reported family structure?

Question 2: Will there be a difference in scores of stress, resilience, achievement motivation, and grade point average based upon self-reported racial/ethnic background?

Question 3: Will students of the underrepresented background demonstrate higher levels of stress verses their non-under-represented peers regardless of family structure?

HYPOTHESES

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference between stresses of Students from non-intact homes and intact home

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference between stresses of Students from underrepresented and represented racial background.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference between stresses of Students of racial background and family status.

III. METHODS

Participants for this study were 161 students (97 females, 60.2%) from Patna University. Participants identified themselves into four different age groups. Over half (57.4%) of students ranged from the ages of 18-20 (see Table 1). The representation of undergraduate class levels was relatively equal in this sample amongst class standing (see Table 2). Additionally, participants self-identified into other demographical categories consisting of family structure, socio-economic status (SES), and ethnicity. The representation of family structures was greatly imbalanced with 92 participants (56.8%) living the majority of their adolescent lives with both biological parents residing in the same household (see Table 3). Students from the non-intact homes were given the opportunity to explain their family structure. Over half of these students stated that their parents were divorced or separated (see table 3B). 24 The representation of SES was very much imbalanced as well with 117 (72.2%) participants stating that they came from a middle-class background (see Table 5). The representation of ethnicity was relatively equal with 77 (47.8%) underrepresented students and 84 (52.2%). Of the 32 participants who identified as multiracial, 24 participants did not select the multiracial option on a demographic questionnaire. Rather, they marked every box in which applied to them (See Table 4). In addition to these variables, single parent households were coded as non-intact households. Non-intact was defined by students from homes in which both biological parents were not present. Students from the non-intact homes represent less than half of participants of this study (69, 42.9%). Race/ and ethnicity was recorded as underrepresented. Out of the 161 participants in this study, 65(40.4%) make up the underrepresented racial background.

MEASURES

General information form: The General Information Form (GIF) was a measure created to collect demographic data on participants. Participants were asked to answer questions regarding the following: gender; age group; class standing; grade point average (GPA), approximate GPA last quarter, cumulative GPA, expected final GPA for the current semester, perceived family structure, perceived SES of household adolescents, and race/ethnicity. Participants were given the opportunity to explain class standing, perceived

family structure, SES, and race/ethnicity. In addition to demographic information, the GIF utilized two scales to measure coping and levels of stress in certain experiences from the Relaxation and Stress Reduction Workbook (Davis, Eshelman, McKay, 2008). The first questionnaire was a 25 fourteen-item adaption of the Coping Styles Questionnaire(Davis, Eshelman, &McKay, 2008) in which participants were asked to rate their responses from strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree. Sample items are "I sleep more than I need to when stressed" (-), "I hate to fail at anything" (-), "I seek out friends and conversation for support" (+), and "I confront my sources of stress and work to change it."

The second scale on the GIF was an adaption of the Schedule of Recent Experience (Davis, Eshelman,& McKay, 2008). This was a 31-item questionnaire in which participants rated their responses on a Likert-type scale from slight discomfort (1- 3), to moderate discomfort (4-7), to extreme discomfort (8-10). Participants were asked to do this for past and expected experiences. No reliability or validity information was given for the scales adapted for the GIF. Although the adaption of the Coping Styles Questionnaire and the adaption of the Schedule of Recent Experience were given to participants, these results were not used in this data analysis. The questionnaires were given before research questions were developed, and do not align with the current research questions. Additionally, predicted next quarter GPA and current predicted quarter GPA were not used.

Student Stress Scale: The Student Stress Scale Test (SSS; Ross, Niebling & Heckert, 1999) is a thirty-one item self-report scale in which participants indicated whether or not they experienced a specific life event in the past or expect to experience it in the future. The original scale consisted of the Student Stress Survey, which was created in 1985 by Insel and Roth (as cited in Ross, Niebling, &Heckert, 1999). The Student Stress Survey originally had 40 items that were divided into four categories of potential sources of stress combined with the Taylor Manifest Anxiety Scale (Insel& Roth, 1985). The scale utilized in this study is an adaptation from Eastern Washington University's Counseling Center. Sample items are as follows: "Change in living conditions"; "Pregnancy"; "First Semester in College"; and "Outstanding personal achievement". No reliability or validity data could be found for the original scale. For the current sample, Cronbach's alpha reliability was .78.

Connor Davidson Resiliency Scale: The Connor-Davidson Resiliency Scale (CDRISC; Connor & Davidson, 2003) is a 25-item self-report questionnaire in which participants are asked to mark the answer that best indicates how much they agree or disagree with statements on the questionnaire. Participants rated these experiences from not true at all (0), to rarely true (1), sometimes true (2), often true (3) and to true nearly all the time (4). Sample items are as follows: "I tend to bounce back after illness, injury, or other hardships"(+), "I give my best effort no matter what the outcome may be"(+), "I take pride in my achievements"(+), and "Having to cope with stress can make me stronger"(+). For the current sample, Cronbach's alpha reliability score was .89.

Mehrabian's Need for Achievement Scale: The Mehrabian's Need for Achievement Scale (MACH), is a 38 item self-report scale consists of statements to which participants indicate the degree of their agreement or disagreement with each statement on a nine point likert type scale (Mehrabian, 2000). Sample items are "Adversity strengthens my resolve to achieve my goals" (+), "I work well under pressure" (+), "I lack persistence" (-), and "I have difficulty working in a new and unfamiliar situation" (-). Mehrabian (2000) reported an internal consistency/reliability coefficient of .91 for the 38-item version of the Achieving Tendency Scale. Cronbach's alpha for the improved MACH obtained by Mehrabian (2000) was .88. Mehrabian (2000) indicated that high internal consistency was particularly noteworthy, considering the extensive efforts made to enhance generality of the scales by including many diverse characteristics associated with achieving tendency. Mehrabian (2000) reported that additional data yielded substantial support for the reliability and validity of the MACH (Mehrabian, 2000). While, for the current sample, Cronbach's alpha for the whole measure was.68, internal reliability for the Achieving Tendency Scale was .58, and .65 for the Disciplined Goal Orientation. Reasons for these low reliabilities will be discussed in the discussion section.

PROCEDURE

Participants were primarily recruited from introductory psychology courses. Students were also recruited from introductory courses in a cultural studies program to ensure a greater representation of race, class, and gender. The instruments were administered in a fifty-minute class period during which participants completed all measures anonymously. Participants were given information about the study and were informed of

their right to withdraw from the study without penalty at any given time. After giving their informed consent, participants filled out the survey packet in the following sequential order: the GIF, the SSS, the CD-RISC, and the MACH. They received course credit, extra credit, or research credits for their participation. The instruments were administered using a paper and pen format, with an average completion time of 30 to 45 minutes. Participants were given the option to receive scored results. Of the 161 participants, one participant requested results and further information on the study.

TEST OF THE HYPOTHESES
Independent sample t-tests were used to test hypotheses 1-2. Hypothesis 3 was conducted as a two way analysis of variance.
Hypothesis 1: Hypothesis 1 had five sub-hypotheses designed to answer the question of whether or not there would be a difference in levels of stress, resilience, achievement motivation, and GPA based on self-reported family structure. Results for all five hypotheses are displayed in Table 6. For hypothesis 1A (students from non-intact households would score higher on a measure of stress than students from intact households), there was no difference between groups in levels of stress. There were also no significant differences between groups for hypothesis 1B (students from non-intact households would score higher in levels of resilience than students from intact households). There were no differences between groups in achieving tendency. There were differences between groups in level of disciplined goal orientation, but the hypothesis was not supported as the differences were in the opposite direction than that predicted. Hypothesis 1D stated that students from non intact households would report lower cumulative GPA's than students from intact households. There was a significant difference and the hypothesis was supported.
 Hypothesis 2: Hypothesis 2 designed to test whether there will be a difference in scores between stresses, resilience, achievement motivation, and cumulative GPA based upon self-reported racial/ethnic backgrounds. See Table 7 for results. Hypothesis 1 (students from underrepresented racial backgrounds would score higher than the majority racial status in levels of stress) was not supported as there was no difference between groups. Although there was a significant difference between groups in levels of disciplined goal orientation, results were in the opposite direction of what was hypothesized

Hypothesis 3 stated that students from underrepresented racial backgrounds would score higher in levels of stress than their majority racial background peers regardless of family structure. Although students from underrepresented racial backgrounds had higher stress levels than their peers from majority racial status backgrounds in both intact and non-intact families, the difference in stress levels was not significant (see Table 7). A two-way analysis of variance conducted to test this hypothesis found no significant interaction between family structure and racial background indicating there is no significant difference in the effect of family structure on reported levels of stress for students from underrepresented racial backgrounds and students from majority racial backgrounds. There were no significant main effects meaning that there was no difference in stress levels neither based on family structure nor on stress levels based on racial backgrounds.

IV. CONCLUSION
Discussion
      Hypothesis 1 has possible explanation for this could be the restricted range in the sample of the college students. The majority of students came from an intact household. This college sample consisted of 56.9% of students from households with both biological parents in the home, 9.4% of students from households with one biological parent and an adult of no relation, and 3.8% of students from households with one biological parent and an adult family member making up 70.1% of this particular sample 33 Students from family structures with more than one adult in the household may have not considered their household a single parent home if both parents were still actively raising them throughout childhood (Carlson & Trapani, 2006). Researchers Carlson & Trapani (2006) further noted that students from different cultures may not consider their homes to be single-parent homes due to different cultural norms (e.g., being raised by grandparents or other relatives in the same household.

      Further explanation could be based on the college transition from literature reviewed. Transitioning to the college atmosphere is taxing for all first year college students. Hartley (2011) found that although students from different backgrounds had different stressors, all students in their first semester scored high in levels of stress.

      The findings for **Hypothesis 2** regarding students from non-intact households and achievement motivation by the means of the Disciplined Goal Orientation Scale presented a

negative relationship. Thus, the hypothesis that students from the non-intact household would score higher in levels of achievement motivation by the means of the Disciplined Goal Orientation Scale was not confirmed. This interpretation must be read with caution in that the reliability in this particular college sample was low for the disciplined goal orientation. Furthermore, effect size was low ($\eta2$ =.01), meaning there was not a large difference for this particular college sample.

Phinney and Haas (2003) state that while academic success for students from these demographical backgrounds is often and important goal, academic success may be compromised of other external obligations. Researchers have argued that these obligations may consist of working for financial stability as familial expectations often supersede academic goals (Phinney& Haas, 2003). Finally, the finding that students from non-intact households would report lower cumulative grade point averages than their intact counterparts was supported. The mean GPA for students coming from intact households was 3.23, whereas the mean GPA for students from non-intact households was 2.92. This could be explained through research findings in the literature that students coming from non-intact household often come un-prepared for the college environment. Furthermore, these students may have other familial obligations in which academic success may be compromised.

There were no significant relationships found between these variables and underrepresented racial backgrounds. A possible explanation for this could be that in this particular sample as only 40.4% make up the under-represented racial background. Further explanation could be interpreted through the literature emphasizing students from the under-represented racial/ethnic background may have been conditioned to minimize stressful events (Robotham, 2008). Students from these backgrounds may not perceive their situations as stressful and may be desensitized to dealing with daily hassles. Comparable to hypothesis 1, a possible explanation is that the college environment is challenging for all students in higher education. In addition, the college experience may grant all students with opportunities to build resilience as well as higher levels of achievement motivation. Although students from different backgrounds experience different stressors, Hartley (2011) found in his research that all students in their first semester scored high in levels of stress overall. First-semester stress may thereby disguise the effects other stressors.

The findings for **Hypothesis 3** regarding students from the underrepresented racial/ethnic background and achievement motivation by the means of the Disciplined Goal Orientation Scale presented a negative relationship. The hypothesis that students from underrepresented background would score higher in levels of achievement motivation by the means of the Disciplined Goal Orientation Scale was not confirmed. Comparable to hypotheses 1, this interpretation must be read with caution in that the reliability in this particular college sample was low for the disciplined goal orientation. Furthermore, the effect size was low ($\eta2$=.01), meaning there wasn't a large difference for this particular college sample. Low reliability for this measure could be accounted for by a misprint in the actual achievement motivation scales in which not all participants were able to fill out the entire measure. Students who received the misprinted copies only had the opportunity to complete the first half of the achieving tendency scales. Furthermore, in some cases, students who did have the misprinted copy did not complete the entire measure.

Further explanation for this finding could be a student's culture may influence his or her levels of motivational achievement. Whereas many researchers have focused on the disparities of under-represented students, Liem et al. (2012) argue a student's culture may in fact influence her/his levels of motivational achievement. These authors found the meanings of academic motivation may actually be positively influenced for one to strive for success in addition to breaking cultural norms.

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LIST OF TABLES

Table 1 Age while participating in survey

Age Brackets	Frequency	Percent
18-20years old	93	57.8%
21-25 years old	53	32.9%
25-30 years old	10	6.2%
30+ years old	5	3.1%
Total	161	100%

Table 2 Class standing

Class Standing	Frequency	Percent
Freshman	46	28.6%
Sophomore	37	22.4%
Junior	45	28.0%
Senior	27	16.8%
Other	7	4.2%
Total	161	100%

Table 3 Description of family structure during the majority of Childhood

Family Structure	Frequency	Percent
Both Biological Parents-Residing in home	91	56.9%
Single Parent home	37	23.1%
Two Parent Home with one adult of no relation	15	9.4%
Single Parent Household with other adult family members living in household	6	3.8%
Other (raised by others/foster care)	11	3.6%
Total	160	100%

Table 3A Reason for single Parent /non intact home during Childhood

Explanation of single Parent Home	Frequency	Percent
Never Married	11	17.7%
Divorced/Separated	36	58.1%
Other	8	6.9%
Total	55	71.9%

Note. *Not every Person from a non –intact home answered the question in which they were given the option to explain.

Table 4 Racial and Ethnicities Represented

Race /Ethnicities	Frequency	Percent
U.P Resider	15	9.3%
Nepal Resider	17	10.6%
W.B Resider	84	52.2%
Tribal	12	7.5%
Native Bihari	2	1.2%
Jharkhand Resider	31	19.3%
Total	161	100%

Table 5 Socio-Economic Status

SES Grouping	Frequency	Percent
Below Poverty Level	3	1.9%
Low	28	17.5%
Middle Class	116	72.5%
Higher SES	13	8.1%
No Answer	1	6%
Total	161	100%

TABLE 6 Stress, Resilience, Achievement Motivation and GPA score based on family structure.

Variable	N	M (SD)	t	P	C.I	N2
Stress Intact	90	293.42 197.96	-1.86	.06	-1.2 to -3.67	.006
Non intact	66	354.7 205.58				
Resilience Intact	91	71.64 13.55	.591	.56	-3.09 to 5.72	.006
Non intact	69	70.32 14.49				
Achievement Motivation intact	35	25.23 19.18	-.204	.839	-11.69 to 9.52	.01
Non intact	29	26.31 23.27				
Disciplined Goal orientation intact	49	10.84 18.32	2.02	.05	.12 to 15.65	.01
Non intact	38	2.95 17.73				
GPA intact	88	3.23 .56	2.63	.01	.08 to .56	.006
Non intact	65	2.92 .85				

Table 7 Levels of stress based upon family structure

Source	Type III of squares	Df	Mean square	F	P	Partial Eta squared
Intact-	74889.540	1	74894.540	1.842	.177	.012
Underrepresented	51747.146	1	51747.146	1.272	.261	.008
Intact-Underrepresented	39.672	1	39.672	.001	.975	.000
Total	156	156				