

Public Abstract

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Title:A Campus Climate Study on Diversity and Inclusion: A Factor Analysis

In the fall of 2015, racial tensions on the University of Missouri - Columbia (MU) campus led to the high-profile protest movement Concerned Student 1950, which culminated in the resignations of the university system president and the chancellor of the university (Hoffman & Mitchell, 2016). In the weeks before the resignations, the present researcher and his former classmate, both students at MU, had been constructing a survey to measure the prevailing campus climate perceptions among MU students, faculty and staff as part of a project for an educational and psychological measurement course. The completed survey was approved by the course instructor, reviewed by class members and subsequently administered to 229 individuals, primarily students, in the university student center on December 3, 2015. Preliminary results from the survey were shared in class and were also distributed to two administrators in the inclusion, diversity and equity office and the dean of the university's College of Education.

This study examines the psychometric properties of the campus climate survey on diversity and inclusion by conducting a factor analysis on its 16 Likert-scale items and analyzing the factor scores as they relate to participant demographics. Sample data from undergraduate students ($n = 215$) was utilized in an effort to identify underlying factor structures. Two primary factors emerged from the data: Factor 1, desire for diversity and inclusion initiatives, for which six items were retained, and Factor 2, sense of comfort and belonging, for which three items were retained. Desire for diversity and inclusion initiatives (Factor 1) measures a respondent's desire for a more diverse campus population as well as initiatives to increase cross-cultural experiences and understanding, while sense of comfort and belonging (Factor 2) measures whether an individual enjoys being a student and feels a sense of inclusion and comfort on campus. Internal consistency for the subscale scores was .92 and .73 for Factor 1 and Factor 2, respectively. Internal consistency for the whole scale was .68. Desire for diversity and inclusion initiatives (Factor 1) was higher for students of color than for White students, and it correlated positively with frequency of discrimination or harassment experiences. Sense of comfort and belonging (Factor 2) was lower for students of color than for White students, and it correlated negatively with frequency of discrimination or harassment experiences.