THE ROLE OF SOCIAL SUPPORT IN UNDERSTANDING THE EFFECTS OF MICROAGGRESSIONS ON BARRIERS AND STRESS FOR AFRICAN AMERICAN COLLEGE STUDENTS

by

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The purpose of this study was to test the effects of racial microaggressions on minority status stress and perceived academic and career barriers, as moderated by social support among African American college students. It was hypothesized that social support would significantly moderate the effect of microaggressions on perceived academic and career barriers and minority status stress, such that higher levels of social support would be related to lower levels of perceived barriers and minority student stress. Participants were recruited from a mid-size Midwestern university from Introductory Psychology 102 courses, university-based student organizations, and the Africana Studies Department. Experiences with microaggressions were assessed using Nadal’s Racial and Ethnic Microaggression Scale (REMS; Nadal, 2011), perception of academic and career barriers were measured using the Perception of Barriers Scale (POBS; Luzzo & McWhirter, 2001), social support was measured using the Interpersonal Support Evaluation List (ISEL; Cohen & Hoberman, 1983), and minority status stress was measured using the Minority Student Stress Scale (MSS; Smedley, Myers, & Harrell, 1993). A demographics questionnaire was administered as well. A moderated multiple-regression analysis was conducted to test the study hypotheses. Our study hypotheses that perceived social support would moderate the relationship between microaggressions and minority status stress and perceptions of barriers was not supported. However, main effects were found for microaggressions and social support on
minority status stress, as well as main effects for social support on perceptions of barriers.

Future research and implications are discussed.