

Associations Between Multidimensional Ethnic Experiences And Domain-level Cognition In Older Adults

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Key Take Away: Experiences associated with one’s ethnoracial identity are differentially associated with cognition, conferring both risk and protection against impairment. Having more experiences of discrimination was most harmful to cognitive performance, while identifying more with one’s ethnoracial identity and feeling more socially affiliated with one’s ethnoracial group seemed to bolster processing speed and executive functioning abilities.

Introduction

- Older adults of color are more likely to be diagnosed with ADRD than their White counterparts¹⁻³.
- Disparities in ADRD burden reflect persistent health inequities that undermine healthy aging.
- Discrimination and low socioeconomic status are well-established risk factors for cognitive decline^{4,5}, while the impact of other culturally-embedded experiences on cognitive functioning remain underexplored (e.g., social affiliation, comfort with mainstream culture).

AIM:
Determine whether experiences closely related to one’s ethnoracial identity independently associate with performance across cognitive domains.

Methods

Cross-sectional analysis

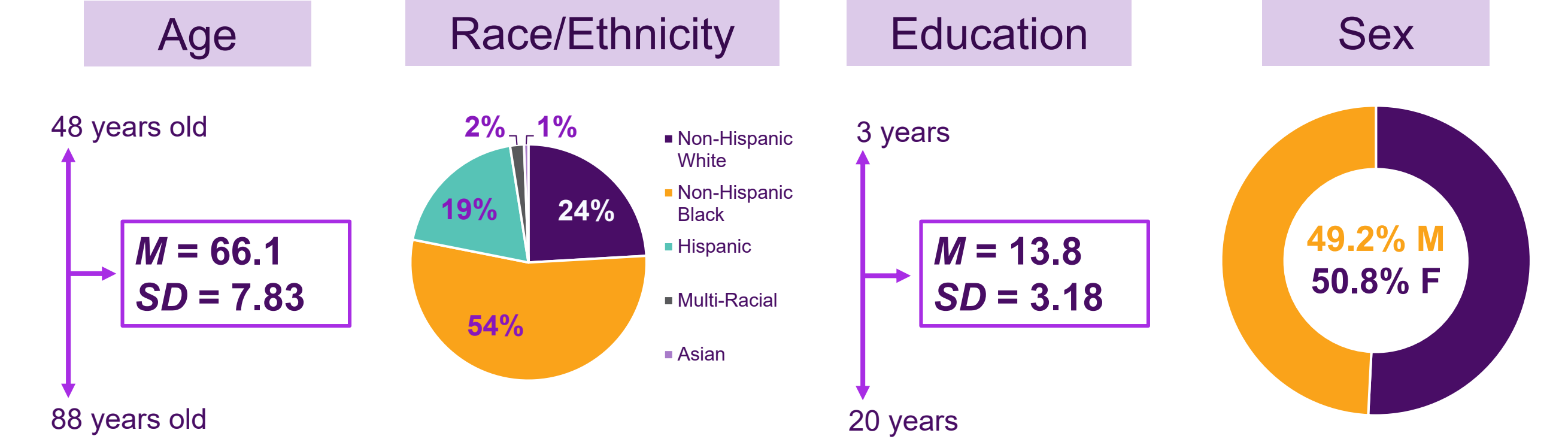
Scale of Ethnic Experience (SEE)⁶
4 dimensions; Corresponding items summed to create a continuous score for each subscale. Scores deemed high/low based on score’s relation to the median

SEE Dimensions	
Ethnic Identity	
Categories	Low: <39, High: ≥39
Example	“I believe that it is important to take part in holidays that celebrate my ethnic group.”
Perceived Discrimination	
Categories	Low: <28, High: ≥28
Example	“In my life, I have experienced prejudice because of my ethnicity.”
Social Affiliation	
Categories	Low: <18, High: ≥18
Example	“I find it easiest to trust people from my own ethnic group.”
Mainstream Comfort	
Categories	Low: <22, High: ≥22
Example	“I’m what most people think of as a typical American.”

Cognitive domain factor structure
previously validated in 1FLADRC sample⁷, with all measures being part of the UDS-3 neuropsychological battery

Regression analyses within structural equation models to assess associations between domain-level cognition and SEE subscale scores. Analyses all **adjusted** for age, sex, education, and race/ethnicity

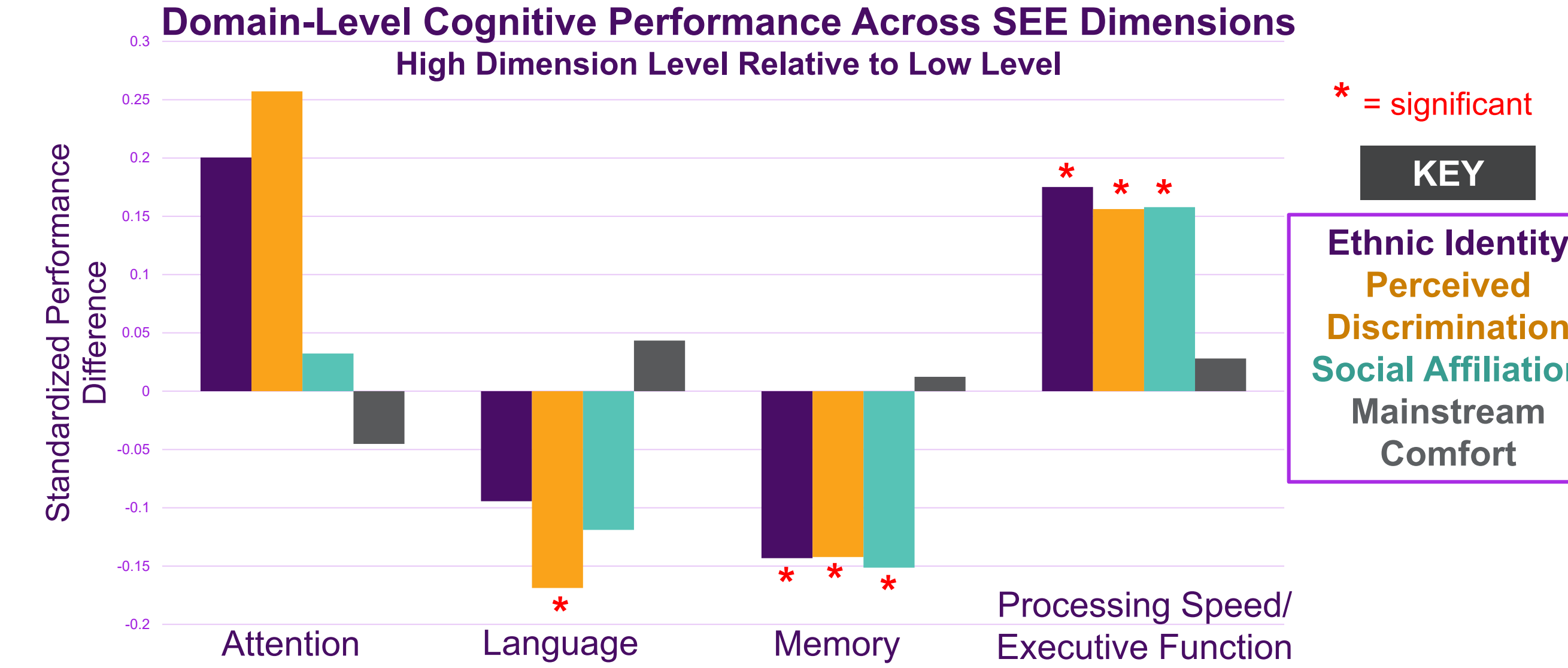
Participants (N=313)



Conclusions

- Consistent with a growing literature, higher levels of perceived discrimination predicted **worse performance across multiple domains**.
- Contrastingly, higher degrees of group identification, affiliation, and discrimination were also shown to associate with **better processing speed and executive function**.
- Given the inextricable link between culturally-embedded experiences, identity, and mental health, and the variability in associations depending on the experiences assessed, these findings underscore the need to carefully consider the cultural experiences under examination here.
- Further examination of demographic differences across **groups with varying levels of these experiences** (i.e., high vs. low) is also needed.

Results



Worse memory performance in those with higher..	Worse language performance in those with higher..	Better processing speed & executive functioning in those with higher...
Ethnic Identity: $\beta = -0.14$, $p = .04$ Perceived Discrimination: $\beta = -0.14$, $p = .04$ Social Affiliation: $\beta = -0.15$, $p = .03$	Perceived Discrimination: $\beta = -0.17$, $p = .02$	Ethnic Identity: $\beta = 0.18$, $p < .01$ Perceived Discrimination: $\beta = 0.16$, $p < .01$ Social Affiliation: $\beta = 0.16$, $p < .01$

References + Contact



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