

Title

The EARA Collaborative Network Showcase: New Research on Discrimination, Inequality, LGBTQ, Prejudice, and Mental Health

Integrative Statement

In 2022, EARA launched a competition for early career researchers and senior academics to join the EARA Collaborative Network. The networked aims to produce high quality scientific outputs through cross-disciplinary and cross-career-stage working in key thematic areas. After a rigorous application procedure, four network clusters were established in the areas of (1) inequality, (2) LGBTQ, (3) prejudice and norms, and (4) well-being and mental health. Each cluster comprises one or two senior scholars and between two and four early career researchers, with members from universities based in Germany, Israel, Italy, Portugal, the UK, and the USA. Each cluster began collaborating on an empirical analysis or evidence synthesis in 2023. In this showcase, each cluster will present their results for the first time. The first presentation investigates the mediating role of students' awareness towards cultural diversity in the relationship between discriminatory school climate and students' well-being. The second presentation focuses on teacher prejudice and uses person-oriented analysis to understand the roles of moral disengagement, self-efficacy, and social anxiety in why teachers present biases against foreign students. The third presentation draws on an international sample of sexual minority adolescents to study the relationships between cyberbullying, depression, and internalised homophobia. Finally, the fourth presentation synthesises the international research on adolescent's experiences of anxiety relating to the COVID-19 pandemic, using a qualitative systematic review. The showcase will end with reflections from the early career researchers involved in the clusters, regarding their experiences of the EARA Collaborative Network and their vision for new collaborative working.

Keywords

Discrimination; inequality; LGBTQ; prejudice; mental health.

Paper 1

At the Crossroads: The Role of Ethnic Background and Socioeconomic Status in the Interplay of Discriminatory School Climate, Awareness towards Cultural Diversity, and Well-being

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Despite the growing knowledge emphasizing the detrimental impact of perceived ethnic discrimination in schools on students' overall well-being, encompassing social, emotional, behavioural dimensions, and academic attainment (e.g., Baysu et al., 2023), less is known about the underlying pathways linking discrimination to adverse psychosocial outcomes and possible heterogeneity in the response of adolescents to the exposure of discrimination. This study investigates whether and how students' awareness towards cultural diversity, encompassing their attitudes toward immigrants and interest in other cultures, mediates the associations between a discriminatory school climate and students' well-being. Additionally, it aims to address potential variations in the associations for ethnic minority and majority students from either relatively higher or lower

socioeconomic statuses (SES). The study draws on the 2018 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) comprising more than 600.000 students (aged 15-16, 50% girls) across 79 countries. Student's subjective well-being was indicated by two measures assessing positive affect and school belonging. Their SES was determined based on the parental occupation status and parental education. The results of the Structural Equation Model (SEM) demonstrated that both students' attitudes toward immigrants and their interest in other cultures partially mediate the negative associations between discriminatory school climate and students' subjective well-being. More importantly, multigroup analyses revealed that when comparing low-SES ethnic minority students with high-SES ethnic majority students, the positive impacts of attitudes toward immigrants on school belonging were stronger for the former, whereas the negative effects of a discriminatory school climate on school belonging were significantly stronger for the latter. Further comparisons between low-SES ethnic minority and low-SES ethnic majority students indicated that the negative effects of a discriminatory school climate on attitudes toward immigrants were stronger in the low-SES ethnic minority students, while its negative effects on school belonging were stronger in the low-SES ethnic majority students. Finally, in the comparison between low-SES ethnic minority students and their high-SES ethnic minority counterparts, the effects of discriminatory school climate on school belonging were stronger in the latter group. Altogether, the findings not only reveal that enhancing cultural awareness may serve as a potential mechanism to mitigate the adverse impact of exposure to discrimination at school but also offer a nuanced understanding of the intersection of social inequities, by recognizing that students are not passive targets of discrimination but respond in accordance with the socio-economic and individual resources available to them.

Keywords

Discriminatory school climate, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, awareness towards cultural diversity, well-being.

Paper 2

Teachers' Prejudice: A Person-Centred Exploration through the Lenses of Moral Disengagement, SelfEfficacy, and Social Anxiety

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Teachers' attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours can profoundly impact the classroom environment and influence the experiences of students from diverse backgrounds and identities. This study delves into teacher prejudice to develop a more nuanced understanding of the intricate dynamics that guide inclusive teaching practices. The primary objective of the current study is to identify prevalent teacher profiles regarding ethnic and homophobic prejudice towards ethnic and sexual minorities in Italy. Additionally, it aims to explore whether these prejudice profiles predict moral disengagement mechanisms, self-efficacy, and social anxiety among Italian teachers. A unique aspect of our approach is the adoption of a person-centred methodology, providing valuable insights not attainable through variable-centred approaches. The study involved 552 Italian secondary-school teachers (Mean age = 46.15, SD = 9.85, 76.4% females). Participants completed self-reported questionnaires assessing ethnic prejudice, teachers' attitudes toward the representation of homosexuality, moral disengagement

scale, teachers' self-efficacy, and social anxiety. Results revealed that teachers exhibit varying levels of prejudice towards ethnic and sexual minorities, with a predominant profile showing moderate prejudice. The findings underscore the connections between teachers' prejudice profiles and moral disengagement and social anxiety, suggesting potential implications for intervention strategies. Notably, teachers' prejudice profiles were significantly associated only with their moral disengagement and social anxiety, not with their self-efficacy in teaching. Surprisingly, teachers' self-efficacy was not found to be significantly linked to their prejudice profiles. This study offers novel insights into how teachers' attitudes can shape their fulfilment of educational tasks within the school environment.

Keywords

Moral disengagement; prejudice; self-efficacy; social anxiety; teachers.

Paper 3

Mental Health Impact of Cyberbullying Among European Sexual Minority Adolescents: The Mediating Role of Internalized Homophobia

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Sexual minority youth face distinct challenges related to cyberbullying, with significant implications for their well-being (Bishop et al., 2023). Furthermore, elevated levels of internalized homophobia (IH) may be correlated with victimization experiences and adverse mental health outcomes (Pucket et al., 2016). This study aims to investigate the interplay between cybervictimization experiences, internalized homophobia, and depression among European sexual minority adolescents. Data from 9,363 sexual minority adolescents (Mage = 15.82; SD = 1.53) were collected through an online survey conducted in Austria, Belgium, Croatia, France, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Netherlands, Slovenia, Spain, Portugal, and the UK. In this study, cyberbullying victimization was evaluated using an 8-item version of the European Cyberbullying Intervention Project Questionnaire ($\alpha = .87$, $\omega = .91$; Brighi et al., 2012). Two additional items were incorporated to assess biased-based cyberbullying victimization. Depression was measured with the Patient Health Questionnaire 2-item depression screener (Richardson et al., 2010). Logistic regressions indicated that sexual minorities experiencing general cyberbullying or bias-based cyberbullying had a 90% and 49% higher likelihood of depression, respectively. Those facing both types were five times more likely to experience depression. Decomposition analyses revealed IH explained 5-10% of the total effects. The study highlights the significant impact of cybervictimization and biased-based cybervictimization on the mental health of sexual minority adolescents, with IH playing a crucial role. Tailored interventions and policies are imperative to address the unique challenges faced by sexual minority youth in diverse European countries, especially given the increasing presence of social media in adolescents' lives.

Keywords

Cyberbullying; homophobia; sexual minority; social media; mental health.

Paper 4

Adolescent Anxiety During the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Qualitative Systematic Review of Risk and Protective Factors

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In the spring of 2020, the global pandemic led to profound change in adolescents' lives. As adolescents navigated school shutdowns, structural instability, and other pandemic-driven changes, rates of stress and anxiety increased globally. Although existing research highlights the necessity of understanding increased rates of anxiety in adolescents during and after the pandemic, current work offers little insight into risk and protective factors for the development of adolescent anxiety at this time. Furthermore, quantitative studies of trends and predictors of adolescent anxiety during the pandemic are unable to capture emergent factors of interest, that are only accessible through listening to adolescents' voices. To more deeply understand how the COVID-19 pandemic impacted anxiety in adolescents around the world, the current study adopted a qualitative approach to synthesising the international evidence on adolescents' lived experiences of anxiety during the COVID-19 pandemic. Using a framework of risk and protective factors, the study summarises adolescents' conceptualisations of anxiety and the factors surrounding their anxiety. A team of researchers searched five databases (Academic Search Complete, British Education Index, Education Research Information Centre, APA PsychInfo, and Scopus) for studies that included qualitative data reported by adolescents on their lived experiences of anxiety during the COVID-19 pandemic. After duplicate records were removed, 348 records were title and abstract screened, resulting in a shortlist of 117 publications for full text screening. The presentation at EARA will discuss how the researchers performed a metathematic analysis of qualitative data to uncover adolescents' experiences of anxiety during the pandemic in relation to a wide range of risk and protective factors in different developmental contexts.

Keywords

Anxiety; adolescence; COVID-19; systematic review; qualitative