

Article Analysis- The Role of Empowerment-Based Protective Factors on Substance Use
Among Youth of Color

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Lardier et al. (2020) conducted a research to evaluate the role of employment-based protective factors on substance use among youth of color. the researchers noted that limited research has been conducted to assess the strength of community-based programs introducing rates of drug use among racial ethnic minority Adolescents. The research under consideration therefore aims to bridge this literature gap by evaluating the role of intrapersonal and cognitive psychological empowerment community civil engagement and ethnic identity among a sample of youth of color. A sample of 383 participants were randomly selected and were aged between 14 and 18 years. The research was based on the empowerment theory which evaluates the relationship between three levels which are the community, organization and psychological levels.

The participants were selected from the north-eastern urban community. The study was quantitative and data was collected through a student questionnaire with 120 questions. Majority of the students or participants included in the research were Hispanic/Latinx which composed 75 percent of the total number of the participants. A total of 24.3 percent of the participants were Black/African Americans. the questionnaires evaluated various outcome behaviors in-line with the Youth Risk Behavioral Surveillance Survey. The questionnaire also evaluated the intrapersonal psychological empowerment, community civil engagement and ethnic identity among other factors.

Data was analyzed using the AMOSSEM software and path analysis technique was adopted. The analysis demonstrated a positive statistical relationship between n intrapersonal psychological empowerment and ethnic identity. There was a negative relationship between intrapersonal psychological empowerment and 30-day substance use identity. The results also showed a positive relationship between cognitive psychological empowerment and ethnic identity and ethnic identity and community civic engagement. A negative relationship was observed between ethnic identity and 30-day substance use.

The study demonstrated a connection between empowerment and ethnic identity hence contributing into the literature on the nomological network of the psychological empowerment construct. The study therefore showed that youth who feel more empowered have a higher positive regard to their racial and ethnic group. The higher positive regard therefore motivates actions for their collective betterment including adopting measures to fight substance use. According to the study, ethnic identity and cognitive psychological empowerment are extremely crucial in enhancing community civic engagement and reducing substance use among young people of color. The findings were in-line with previous studies that showed that people who are more empowered in terms of thinking and feeling possess more positive perceptions of ethnic identity.

The study therefore proposed that wellness programs targeting young people of color should adopt emancipatory, action-oriented, empowerment-based programs. The study was however subject to various limitations. First, the research was based on data from a sample of urban adolescents drawn from a single location in the northeastern United States hence the research was exposed to generalizability issues. Secondly, cross-sectional data was analyzed cross-sectionally as opposed to longitudinally. Additionally, the research failed to examine the within-group differences among the study participants. The study therefore proposed that future studies should evaluate the within-group differences due to the heterogeneity that is present among the participants. The study was also limited by the issues related to measuring psychological empowerment. The study used CES to measure the intrapersonal and cognitive psychological empowerment yet the tool has not been fully validated. Failure to validate CES may have exposed the research to validity issues hence misleading the results.

References

- Lardier, D. T., Opara, I., Reid, R. J., & Garcia-Reid, P. (2020). The role of empowerment-based protective factors on substance use among youth of color. *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal*, 1-15.