

Black-White Marriages: The Moderating Role of Openness on Discrimination and Marital Satisfaction

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ABSTRACT

Open communication between Black-White spouses buffer against discrimination experienced by couples. Results indicated that only for Black partners, when experiences of couple discrimination were high, levels of marital satisfaction was high among partners who reported high openness and reduced among partners who reported low openness. No other moderating effects were found.

HYPOTHESES

H1: Shared couple discrimination will be negatively linked to marital satisfaction for both partners.
H2: Openness will moderate the relationship between shared couple discrimination and marital satisfaction.

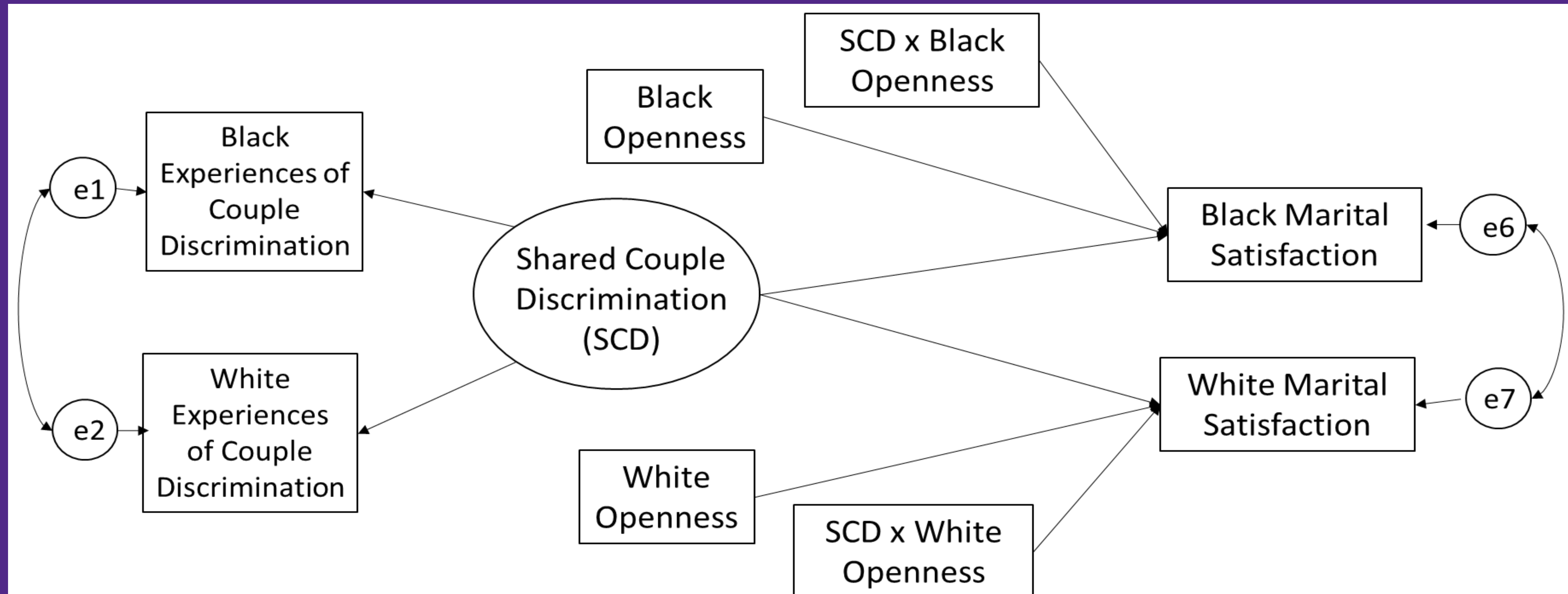


Figure 1
Proposed Model of Openness moderating the Relationship between Shared Discrimination and Marital Satisfaction

METHOD

Participants: 178 couples: 93 Black husband-White wife and 85 White husband-Black wife. *M* length of marriage = 6.63 years, *M* no. of children = 2.88. *M* annual income = \$60,000 to \$69,999 per partner.

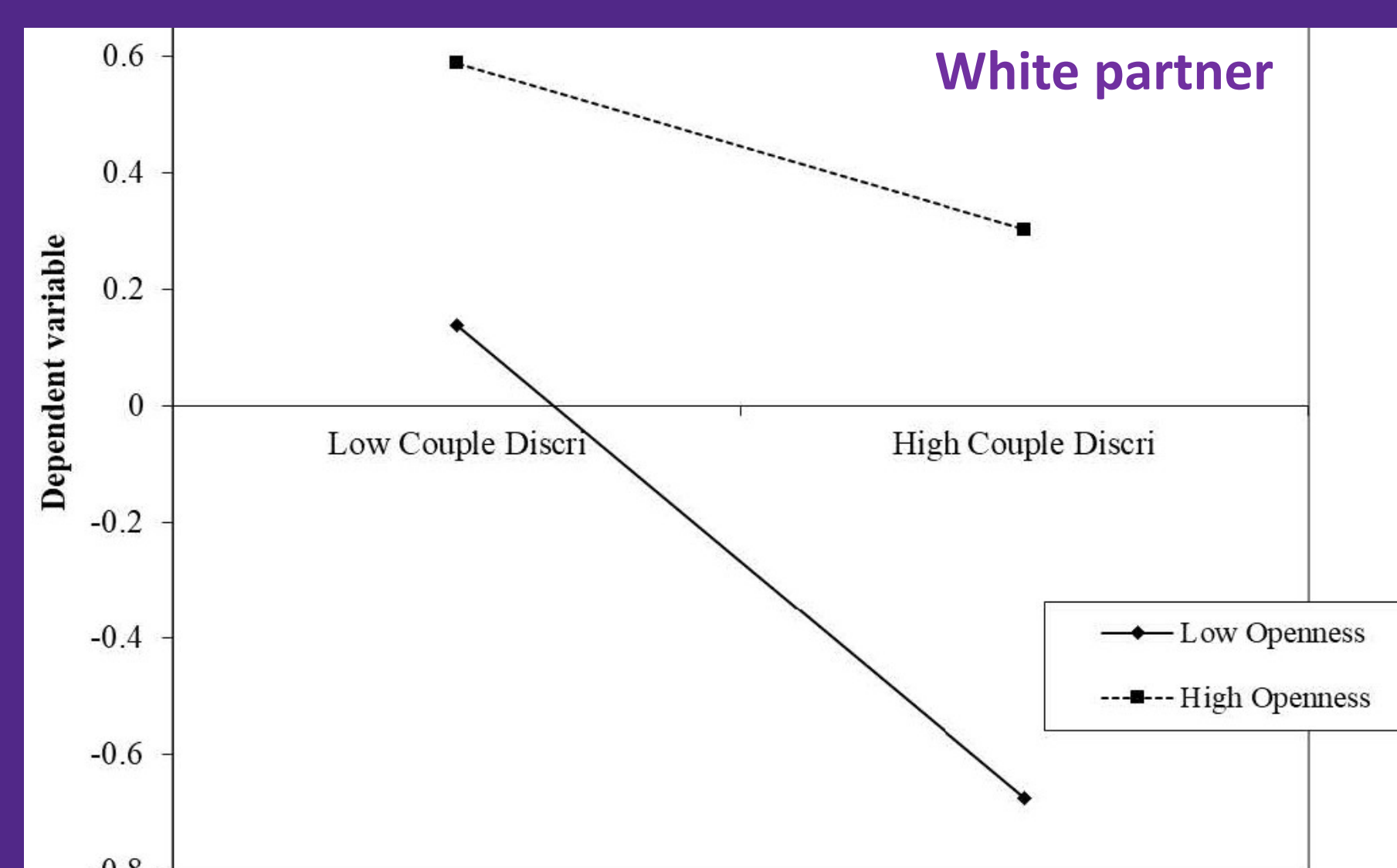
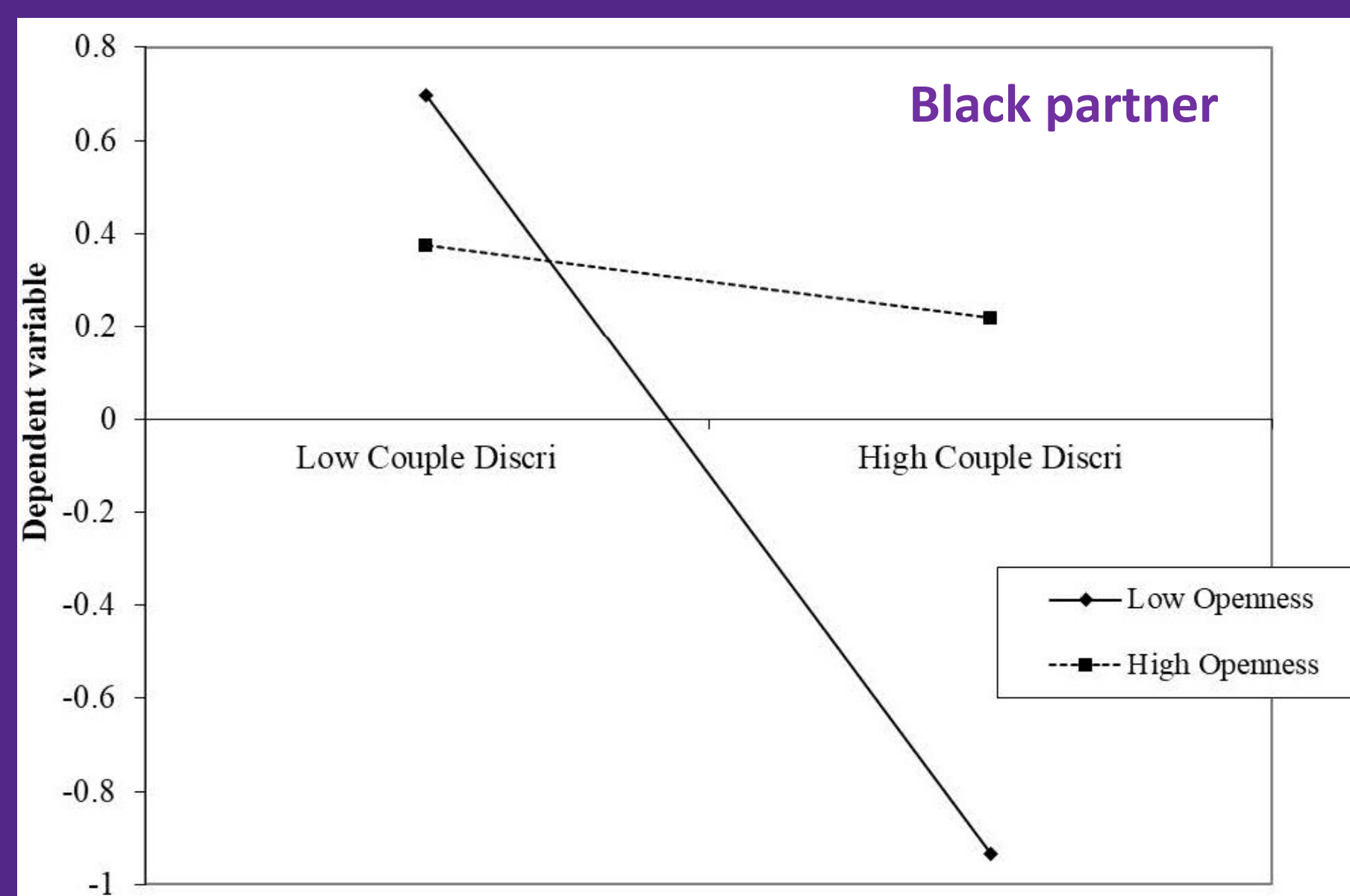
Measures: 1) Openness subscale from the Relationship Maintenance Strategies Measure (Canary & Stafford, 1992), 2) Couple Satisfaction Inventory (Funk & Rogge, 2007), 3) Experience of discrimination measured being treated as inferior, with less respect than others, and as if you have been dishonest, fearful of you, insulted/received name-calling, and threatened/harassed (Trail, Goff, Bradbury, and Karney (2012). Variables were mean-centered.

Control variables: Exposure to diversity (Phinney, Ferguson, & Tate, 1997), age, no. of children, duration of marriage and group (Black husband-White wife or White husband-Black wife).

Analysis: Common-fate latent moderation structural equation model was tested using Mplus. Model measurement (Model 1) was determined before the structural model (Model 2).

Results: H1: Fully supported for Black ($b = -0.55, p < .001$) and White partners ($b = -0.37, p = .036$). H2: Level of openness moderated the effect of shared couple discrimination on satisfaction for Black ($b = 0.43, p = .002$) but not for White partners ($b = 0.18, p = .24$).

Openness Moderating Experiences of Couple Discrimination and Marital Satisfaction



RESULTS

Summary of Unstandardized and Standardized Results of Model Predicting Marital Satisfaction

	Model 1			Model 2		
	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	β
Shared Couple Discrimination:						
Black partner	1.12	.21	.88***	1.22	.07	.88***
White partner	1.00	.00	.84***	1.00	.00	.83***

Dependent Variable: Black Marital Satisfaction

	$R^2 = .19, p = .007$			$R^2 = .25, p = .002$		
Shared Couple Discrimination	-.51	.17	-.29***	-.55	.14	-.31***
Black Openness	.20	.09	.20*	.18	.07	.19**
Black Openness x Shared Couple Discrimination				.43	.14	.26***
Group	.26	.16	.13	.24	.16	.12
Age	-.03	.02	-.14	-.03	.02	-.14*
Number of Children	.11	.06	.13	.09	.06	.11
Duration of Marriage	.002	.002	.10	.002	.002	.12
Income	.02	.03	.05	.02	.03	.04
Exposure to Diversity	.01	.07	.01	.01	.07	.01

Dependent Variable: White Marital Satisfaction

	$R^2 = .19, p = .003$			$R^2 = .19, p = .013$		
Shared Couple Discrimination	-.31	.14	-.18*	-.37	.18	-.21*
White Openness	.38	.08	.38***	.36	.07	.36***
White Openness x Shared Couple Discrimination				.18	.16	.11
Group	-.08	.17	-.04	-.08	.17	-.04
Age	-.003	.02	-.01	-.002	.02	-.01
Number of Children	-.04	.07	-.05	-.04	.07	-.05
Duration of Marriage	.002	.002	.10	.002	.002	.10
Income	.01	.03	.03	.01	.03	.02
Exposure to Diversity	-.08	.06	-.07	-.06	.05	-.05

Fit Indices:

Log-likelihood H0 Value	-620.69	-612.27
AIC	1291.38	1278.83
BIC	1366.64	1359.38
Chi-square	37.12 ($p = .28$)	
RMSEA	.03	
CFI	.98	
TLI	.97	

Note. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.