



Ethnic Differences in Spirituality, Shame, and Stigma in People Living with HIV

Nicole M. Taylor, Ph.D.¹, Erin M. Fekete, Ph.D.¹,
Matthew D. Skinta³, Stacey L. Williams², Ph.D.

¹University of Indianapolis, ²East Tennessee State University, ³Private Practice, San Francisco, CA

First Author Contact Information: ntaylor@indy.edu



ABSTRACT

We hypothesized that the links between spirituality and lower HIV-related stigma would be accounted for by lower levels of shame, and that this mediation model would be moderated by ethnicity in 106 people living with HIV (PLWH). Moderated mediation analyses revealed that higher spirituality was associated with reduced levels of shame, which in turn was associated with lower levels of HIV-related stigma. The indirect effect of spirituality on lower stigma through reduced shame was significant for White but not for Non-White PLWH. It is possible that other mechanisms exist to explain how spirituality operates on stigma for minorities living with HIV.

PARTICIPANTS (N = 106)

Age (Years)	Mean = 42.6
Gender	66% male, 44% female
Ethnicity	35.8% White; 64.2% Non-White (48.2% Black, 13.2% Hispanic, 2.8% Biracial)
Education	Did Not Graduate High School = 5.7%, High School Graduate = 74.5%, College Graduate = 19.8%
Yearly Income	Median = \$10,000 - \$14,999
Years since HIV diagnosis	Mean = 11.2 years

ANALYSIS PLAN

- Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA)
 - Examine ethnic differences in key study variables after accounting for covariates.
- Moderated Mediation Analysis
 - Examine the conditional indirect effects of the predictor on the outcome variable through the mediator at differing levels of the moderator.
 - Continuous predictor and mediator variables were centered to protect against multicollinearity.

Covariates

- Any ethnic differences in sociodemographic, health, or social characteristics.
- Any sociodemographic, health, or social characteristics associated with the outcome variable after partialling out covariates due to ethnic differences.

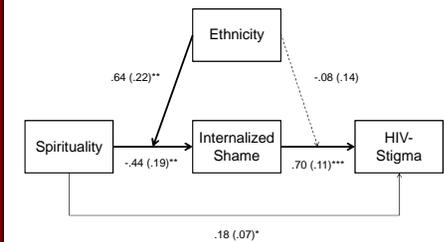
ETHNIC DIFFERENCES IN KEY STUDY VARIABLES

- No differences emerged between Whites and Non-Whites in spirituality, internalized shame, or HIV-related stigma.

Variable	White n = 38 Adj. M (SD)	Non-White n = 68 Adj. M (SD)	F-value	Partial Eta ²
Spirituality	80.39 (4.4)	76.23 (3.2)	.53	.01
Internalized Shame	78.63 (4.6)	70.31 (3.3)	1.95	.02
HIV-Stigma	104.21 (4.3)	93.80 (3.1)	3.40	.03

Covariates include: age, gender, living status, marital status, self-rated health.

RESULTS



*p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001

Covariates include: age, gender, living status, marital status, self-rated health.

	Conditional Indirect Effect	SE	Bootstrapped Confidence Interval
White	-.31	.12	-.57 to -.09*
Non-White	.12	.08	-.03 to .29

Index of Moderated Mediation = .43 (.14)
Bootstrapped Confidence Interval = .17 to .75*

- Internalized shame partially mediated the relationship between spirituality and HIV-related stigma, and this relationship was moderated by ethnicity.

DISCUSSION

- Higher levels of spirituality, including religiosity, faith, and peace are related to reduced levels of shame in White men and women living with HIV, which in turn is associated with less HIV-related stigma.
 - It is possible that other mechanisms, such as social support or a sense of purpose, explain how spirituality operates on stigma for minorities living with HIV.
- Interventions aimed at reducing HIV-related stigma should acknowledge the importance of spirituality for both minority and non-minority individuals living with HIV.

INTRODUCTION

- HIV is still a highly stigmatized illness.
 - People living with HIV (PLWH) experience higher levels of shame and stigma as a result of their illness diagnosis.
- The health benefits of spirituality in PLWH, particularly those from ethnic minority populations, have been well-documented.
 - Increased psychological well-being, quality of life, better health behaviors, and longer survival rates.
 - It is also possible that being more spiritual is linked to reduced feelings of shame about one's HIV-illness.
- Lower levels of shame may relate to lower perceptions or experiences of HIV-related stigma.

HYPOTHESES

- We hypothesized that the links between spirituality and lower HIV-related stigma would be accounted for by lower levels of shame.
- Further, we expected that this mediation model would be moderated by ethnicity (White versus Non-White).
 - The relationship between spirituality, lower shame, and reduced stigma would be stronger for Non-White PLWH than White PLWH.

PROCEDURE

- Eligibility Criteria
 - At least 18 years of age.
 - Diagnosed by a doctor with HIV or AIDS.
 - Valid email address.
- Participants completed an online questionnaire and were compensated with a \$20.00 gift card.
- Measures included:
 - Demographic Information
 - Ironson-Woods Spirituality/Religiosity Index (Ironson et al., 2002)
 - Internalized Shame Scale (Rosario & White, 2006)
 - HIV Stigma Scale (Berger, Ferrans, & Lashley, 2001)

MEASURES

Measure	Mean	SD	Actual Range	Potential Range	α
Spirituality	77.71	26.3	22-110	22-110	.98
Internalized Shame	73.29	26.5	28-139	28-140	.96
HIV-Stigma	97.53	25.4	43-153	41-164	.96