

Perceived Discrimination and Students' Behavioural Changes: The Role of Cultural Background and Societal Influence

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Abstract

Discrimination among students in educational institutes is one of the key reasons for their behavioural changes. Research has increasingly recognized the discriminating behaviour of teachers, but the impact of perceived discrimination by teachers on students' behavioural changes has not been investigated enough. Applying a theoretical model based on Phenomenological Variant of Ecological Systems Theory (PVEST), the present study aimed to investigate the manner in which students' behavioural changes were determined by their teachers' perceived discrimination, after knowing family background and how this relationship was moderated by societal influence and cultural background. A sample survey of 215 class 8 to class 10 students studying in rural and urban schools located in Krishnagiri district in Tamil Nadu, India was administered through questionnaires and partial least squares-structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) was used to evaluate the gathered data. Overall, perceived teacher discrimination of students based on their caste, creed, and financial background significantly influenced students behaviour. The association between students' behavioural changes and perceived discrimination was significantly influenced by cultural background. However, societal influence did not significantly change the effect of perceived students' discrimination on their behavioural changes.

Keywords: behavioural changes, cultural background, family background, perceived discrimination, students' societal influence

Effective pedagogical environments have a direct connection with students' interactive behaviour. Perceived discrimination is a common practice across educational institutions (Hagiwara et al., 2017) and contributes to the gap in the caste and creed concerning the interactive behaviour of students (Utsey et al., 2008; Mittal, 2020). Perceived discrimination can be defined as a perceived approach wherein personal characteristics (e.g. physical appearance and sexual orientation), attributes (e.g. gender and race), and other social factors are used to differentiate or exclude a person or a group of persons (Giurgiu et al., 2015). The discrimination of students by teachers based on caste and creed is considered as differential and biased treatment (Carter et al., 2017). Multiple negative outcomes such as mental health and physical health deteriorations, negative social interactions, etc., are primarily caused by perceived discrimination (Brondolo et al., 2009). The classroom environment is compromised and interactive behaviour between students and teachers is affected negatively by teachers' discriminating behaviour (Jennings and Greenberg, 2009). Discriminatory attitudes of teachers result in students' reduced sense of belonging, disengagement from classroom teaching all of which can hinder students' behaviour in educational institutions (Kidger et al., 2016). In addition, previous studies have stated that discriminating behaviour in educational institutes affects the students' academic performance and psychological behaviour (Alvarez et al., 2004; Cogburn et al. 2011; Sisask et al., 2014; Banerjee et al., 2018).

Factors that might buffer or prompt discrimination among students and the influence of teachers' discrimination on students' learning outcomes and behavioural changes must be recognized by teachers and counsellors (Sehgal et al., 2017). Among Indians, cultural backgrounds and societal factors affect sensitivity to perceived discrimination (Wu et al., 2015; Yasui et al., 2015). Thus, the experience of perceived discrimination is not determined by caste and creed, but by the overlap of cultural background and societal influence (Assari and Lankarani, 2017). As the value system, attributions and standards of each intersectional group are unique, the causes and effects of the same perceived discriminating experiences may be different (Caldwell et al., 2013).

Several studies have illustrated that students face discrimination based on religion, socio-economic status, and gender which includes religion-based bullying of students by teachers, discrimination in seat arrangements and exclusion based on gender (Ramachandran and Naorem, 2013; Dupper et al., 2015; Robnett, 2016). Caste-based discrimination was evident in schools from Telangana and Andhra Pradesh where students were denied from participating in extracurricular activities such as sports, cultural activities, and so forth. (Dongre, 2017). The discrimination of primary school students based on socio-demographic factors like age, family background and parenting styles were reported in Mangalore, India (Joseph et al., 2021). Although there are abundant studies on the conflict-inducing approach of teachers, studies focusing on the discriminating behaviour of teachers are scarce and scattered (Ali et al., 2019). Despite the fact that some studies have considered the relationship between teacher-student relationship and students' perceived discrimination, the effect of perceived discrimination by teachers on students' behavioural changes has not been investigated enough. In addition, though perceived discrimination is quite prevalent among students (Rosenbloom and Way, 2004), investigation regarding differences in family background, cultural background and societal influence concerning the impact of teachers' discrimination on students' behavioural changes is limited (Bryan et al., 2018). Moreover, studies that developed and utilized an integrated framework investigating the components (environmental and individual characteristics) that control the consequences of perceived discrimination on students' behavioural changes are not adequate (Williams & Bryan, 2013; McGee & Pearman, 2014). Furthermore, studies with larger sample sizes to test moderations of perceived students'

discrimination on students' behavioural changes are needed. The present study is unique because it explores students' behavioural changes.

Thus, to fill the relevant research gaps, the present study aimed to explore the effect of perceived discrimination by teachers on behavioural changes among students after controlling for family background. Besides, the study aimed to assess whether cultural background and societal influence controlled the association between students' behavioural changes and perceived discrimination. Identification and examination of elements that control the consequences of teachers' perceived discrimination on students' behavioural changes can support the formulation of relevant precautionary measures. Considering the past studies on sensitivity to discrimination (Wildhagen, 2011; Slobodin et al., 2021), this study anticipated a wider impact of perceived discrimination on students' behavioural changes in the presence of moderators.

Theoretical Underpinnings

Utilizing integrated frameworks that highlight the mechanisms and cause and effect relationship, is vital for academic performance. This is specifically applicable when student outcomes are considered because of risk factors based on individual and environmental characteristics. Hence, this study turns to the Phenomenological Variant of Ecological Systems Theory (PVEST) (Spencer, 1995), which posits the role of contextual influence (social, cultural and family) on the development of young people (Spencer 1999). In the context of the PVEST framework, the significance of examining risk factors (e.g., caste-based discrimination) and how they have been linked to negative outcomes has been highlighted (Spencer et al., 2003). The effect of perceived school-based discrimination of students by teachers is examined in this study and it is theorized as total stress involvement in the PVEST framework. Such stress engagement might be associated with negative outcomes for youth in academic settings. Then again, perceived caste-based discrimination of youth might be linked to more adaptive outcomes by the protective element of culture-family socialization.

Discrimination as a risk factor for behavioural outcomes. The differential treatment due to race, religion, caste, creed and economic backgrounds is termed discrimination (Smart Richman and Leary, 2009). Unfortunately, in the present scenario, educational institutions have become one of the common spaces for all kinds of student discrimination. Caste and economic backgrounds are listed as the main bases of discrimination in the Indian education system (Desai and Kulkarni, 2008). Discrimination based on caste, creed and economic backgrounds in Indian educational institutions has been prevalent for decades. The physical elimination and biased attitude of teachers towards the predicament of ostracized pupils is forcing several learners to behave negatively and despite functional preventive interventions, little is being done by administrations to address the issue (Sitlhou, 2017). Any such injustice taking place in educational institutions affects the academic outcomes, psychological health, and school engagement of the students.

A negative teacher-student relationship, including a perceived bias, predicts poorer behavioural functioning in adolescents (Hamre and Pianta, 2001). Jain and Narayan (2011) highlighted the discrimination faced by the students based on their religious beliefs. Ramachandran and Naorem, (2013) pointed out that the students belonging to lower caste were not permitted to seat adjacent to an upper caste student. Further, the biases faced by backward caste students were demonstrated by Kurian (2015). Additionally, Wenz and Hoenig (2020) also illustrated the discrimination against the students. However, all these studies failed to assess the impacts on student outcomes. Few studies like Ingul et al. (2012) reported that the psychological

adjustment due to bias led to negative perceptions about the school that in turn resulted in reduced students' interactive behaviour. Rueger and Jenkins (2014) highlighted diminished physical and mental health as a result of discrimination among students. Thus, persistent discrimination based on caste, creed and economic background ultimately results in negative behavioural outcomes, even in the education sector (Ali et al., 2019). The below-mentioned hypothesis is formulated based on the discussion:

H1: There is a significant impact of perceived discrimination of students by teachers based on caste, creed and economic backgrounds on students' behavioural changes

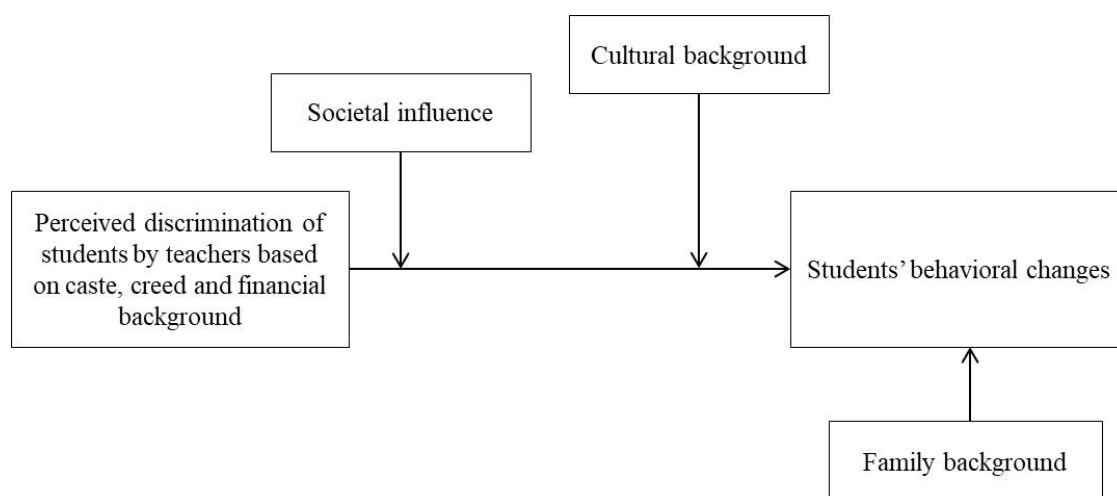
Role of family background, cultural background and societal factors. Based on the academic resilience outlook, moderating the relationship is one of the individual and environmental characteristics that affect the association between outcomes and risk factors (García-Izquierdo et al., 2018). Students' overall success and academic performance is determined by their family background, which is largely expressed as the socioeconomic status (Adeyemo and Kuyoro, 2013). Besides, a substantial association between the prevalence of behavioural problems in students and their family background in terms of parents or caretakers being alcoholic or absent is evident in literature (Jogdand and Naik, 2014). Discrimination among students is reportedly predicted by a low socio-economic status (Jackson et al., 2012). Previous studies have examined family background as an individual variable that may modify student outcomes (Lee et al., 2015). Students belonging to marginalized families are more likely to experience behavioural changes caused by perceived discrimination by teachers (OECD, 2017).

Researchers have emphasized that cultural background has theoretical groundwork in the social identity theory (Tajfel and Turner, 1986), theorizing that the risk outcome of perceived discrimination may be mitigated for individuals who identify with their cultural background (Phinney, 2003). However, in the context of educational institutions, previous studies also suggest that identification with a cultural background may result in negative student outcomes due to increased awareness of negative labels and little importance of positive societal influence on the cultural background (Oyserman, 2008; Wildhagen, 2011). For instance, in a longitudinal study by Cheng and Klugman (2010), students possessing a minority cultural background had lower connectedness to schools. Banerjee et al. (2018) highlighted the prevalence of discrimination by teachers based on students' cultural background, which buffered the influence of perceived discrimination on students' learning outcomes. Although perceived discrimination may exist in multiple contexts, all forms represent different degrees of risks to various types of social identity needs, which relate to changes in behavioural outcomes (Verkuyten et al., 2019). Consistent with the role of these factors in existing literature, this study offers the following hypothesis.

H2: Cultural background and societal influence moderates the effect of perceived discrimination by teachers on students' behavioural changes

The conceptual framework proposed here builds on the perceived discrimination of students that has been supported by theoretical perspectives to act as a direct antecedent of students' behavioural changes when controlling for family background. The alternative framework builds on the idea that cultural background and societal influence will moderate the association between students' behavioural changes and their perceived discrimination. These propositions are illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1
Theoretical Framework of the Present Study



Materials and Methods

Sampling Procedure and Survey Administration

The present study used a quantitative research method and adopted a random sampling procedure to collect data through a survey done on school students from class 8 to class 10 studying in one rural school and one urban school located in Krishnagiri district in Tamil Nadu, India. In total, 215 questionnaires were found useful for further analysis. The student sample included 116 males (54.0%) and 99 females (46.0%). Most of the students were aged between 16 and 18 years (63.3%). The sample included 113 class 10 students (52.5%), 58 class 9 students (27.0%) and 44 class 8 students (20.5%), respectively. The student sample included 66 family heads as skilled workers (30.7%), 60 as farmers (27.9%), 44 as unskilled workers (20.7%), 39 as government employees (18.1%) and 6 were unemployed (2.8%).

Research Instrument

This study included one exogenous variable: Perceived discrimination of students. The endogenous variable was students' behavioural change. Cultural background and societal factors are used as moderating variables. Family background is used as the control variable. This study employed a structured questionnaire consisting of 30 items that measured five variables used in the study. Some questionnaire items were negatively framed to check the response bias. The first couple of statements were designed to understand perceived students' discrimination by adapting eight items from Fox and Stallworth (2005), Gelisli (2007) and Ali et al. (2019). Meanwhile, to measure behavioural changes of students, six items were adapted from Ali et al. (2019). Besides, societal factors and cultural background were explained by six and three items by Soric (2011). Moreover, to assess family background, three categorical items were adapted by Sun and Shek (2012) and Ali et al. (2019). All the variables, except for the family background, were assessed through a 5-point Likert scale, wherein strongly disagree was indicated by 1 and strongly agree was indicated by 5.

Data Analysis

The partial least squares (PLS)-structured equation modelling (SEM) technique was used to analyse the data, inspect the latent constructs used in the measurement model, and test the interactions between latent constructs and moderators in the structural model, as indicated in

Figure 1. A three-step process was followed in which R^2 and sizes of effects for “perceived teachers’ discrimination” on “students’ behavioural changes” were evaluated. First, the model was run without the moderators (cultural background and societal influence); secondly, the direct effects of “cultural background” and “societal influence” on students’ behavioural changes were measured; and thirdly, “cultural background” and “societal influence” were incorporated and moderator effect was assessed. Following guidelines from Streukens and Leroi-Werelds (2016) for estimating the statistical significance of path estimates using PLS-SEM, bootstrapping technique was executed using 10,000 sub-samples to increase the degree of precision. SmartPLS and IBM SPSS were employed to analyze the data and generate the results.

Results

Analysis of the Measurement Model

The measurement model was assessed by the study to ensure relevant reliability, composite reliability, and construct validity of the scales used. The various items of latent variables were subjected to confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to assess overall fitness of the measurement model. The result of the factor analysis of the study constructs is illustrated in Table 1. Average variance extracted (AVE) values and factor loading values were found greater than 0.50, thereby ensuring convergent validity (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). Composite reliability (CR) of the variables was above the threshold of 0.70 and it ranged between 0.78 and 0.81 (Hair et al., 2017). It can be inferred that constructs had high internal consistency for items associated with each variable. The remaining constructs were eliminated as the AVE values were less than 0.50.

Table 1
Reliability and Validity Outcomes

Latent constructs	Cronbach's Alpha	Factor loading	CR	AVE
Perceived teachers' discrimination	0.65		0.81	0.59
DS1 Teachers don't answer my questions in the class		0.81		
DS3 Teachers make disrespectful comments towards me in the class because of my caste		0.82		
DS8 I feel that teachers always pay attention to students of higher caste		0.66		
Cultural background	0.60		0.80	0.66
CF1 I have some beliefs that affect my interaction with students of other caste		0.76		
CF3 The curriculum provided by my school is based on different cultural backgrounds		0.87		
Societal influence	0.60		0.78	0.54
SF3 I am disciplined at school because I am disciplined at home		0.74		
SF4 I interact with students of different caste		0.69		
SF5 The society has been the primary influence in my life regarding how I feel about people of other caste		0.78		
Students' behavioural changes	0.60		0.78	0.54
BCS1 I am not interested in listening to lectures in the class		0.78		
BCS2 I like to talk to my friends during the class		0.69		
BCS5 I do not submit class assignments		0.74		

Note: CR=composite reliability; AVE=average variance extracted

A test of discriminant validity was assessed for all construct variables in the model. The analysis presented in Table 2 shows that the AVE square root values of each construct were higher than the multiple correlation values for the respective constructs, which demonstrated the discriminant validity of all construct variables in the model (Hair et al., 2017).

Table 2
Discriminant Validity Indicators

Construct	BCS	CB	DS	SF
Behavioural changes (BCS)	0.73			
Cultural background (CB)	0.45	0.81		
Perceived teachers' discrimination (DS)	0.64	0.37	0.77	
Societal influence (SF)	0.70	0.34	0.62	0.74

The Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) criterion was also used to assess discriminant validity. The analysis presented in Table 3 demonstrates that the HTMT values were below 0.90, thereby confirming the absence of any issues on discriminant validity (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). Thus, the variables were distinctly different from each other. Therefore, discriminant validity was achieved.

Table 3
Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

	Behavioural changes	Cultural background	Discrimination	Societal influence
Behavioural changes	-			
Cultural background	0.82			
Perceived discrimination	0.88	0.64		
Societal influence	0.83	0.61	0.88	-

Analysis of the Structural Model

Based on the assessment of the measurement model, the reliabilities and validities of the present model are confirmed, from which the structural relationships and significance of the hypotheses are established. The Q^2 value was greater than zero for the endogenous construct, indicating an adequate predictive relevance of the model (Geisser, 1975) (Table 4). The level of perceived students' discrimination can be explained by 61.0% variation in students' behavioural changes, thereby explaining nearly moderate to high variance (Chin, 1998) (Table 4).

Further, the PLS-SEM allows for identifying the significance of the relationships between the variables. In considering their effect on each other, the association between students' behavioural changes and perceived discrimination showed a highly (0.29) significant effect in the model (Figure 2), thereby confirming H1. Concerning the influence of moderating variables on the association between dependent and independent latent variables, the results showed that cultural background significantly but negatively moderates the effect of perceived students' discrimination on behavioural changes ($\beta = -0.12$, $T = 2.13$, $p < 0.001$), implying that cultural background can significantly reduce the effect of perceived students' discrimination on their behavioural changes. However, it was also observed that societal influence did not significantly increase or decrease the effect of perceived students' discrimination on their behavioural changes ($\beta = 0.03$, $t = 0.70$, $p > 0.05$) (Table 4).

Table 4
Structural Paths and Related Indicators

DV	IV	Hypothesis	Path estimates	t-Value	Significance (result)	R ²	Q ²
BCS	DS	H1	0.29***	4.47	Supported	0.61	0.30
		DS*CB	-0.12*	2.13	Supported	-	-
	H2	DS*SF	0.03	0.70	Not supported	-	-

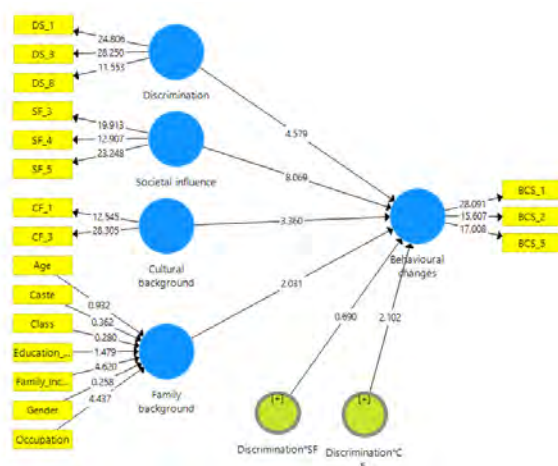
*** $p < 0.001$, * $p < 0.05$

The PLS-SEM allows for further analysis through bootstrapping (see Table 5) in identifying the direct relationships between the variables. Based on PLS-SEM procedure of direct effects, it is established that the direct effects (cultural background \rightarrow students' behavioural changes: $\beta = 0.18$, $t = 3.39$; societal influence \rightarrow students' behavioural changes: $\beta = 0.43$, $t = 7.86$; family background \rightarrow students' behavioural changes: $\beta = 0.13$, $t = 2.01$) were significant.

Table 5
Bootstrapping Direct Effects at 95% Confidence Intervals (CIs)

	β	Sample Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics	P Values
Cultural background -> Behavioural changes	0.18	0.05	3.39	0.00
Family background -> Behavioural changes	0.13	0.05	2.01	0.04
Societal influence -> Behavioural changes	0.43	0.05	7.86	0.00

Figure 2
SEM Model for the Study



Moderating Effects

The role of cultural background and societal influence as moderators between perceived discrimination of students was their behavioural changes were tested (Table 6). An effect size of predictors in each case was assessed following Cohen's f^2 criteria. The results demonstrate that the second case and third case in which direct and the moderating (cultural background) interaction effects were created, reported a higher effect size in comparison to other scenarios. The results indicated an f^2 value of 0.12 reflecting a small effect size (Cohen, 1988); thereby partially confirming hypothesis H2.

Table 6
Moderation Effects

State of model testing	Effect size
Model without cultural background	0.031
Model without societal influence	0.025
Model with cultural background as a direct effect	0.074
Model with societal influence as a direct effect	0.287
Model with cultural background as a moderator	0.121
Model with societal influence as a moderator	0.003

Discussion

While research has consistently focused on discrimination based on caste and creed, less is known about specific discrimination sources in different settings, including institutional contexts. The present study focused specifically on perceived teacher discrimination. The present research analysed the effects of teachers' perceived discrimination on students' behavioural changes when controlling for family background. Besides, this study examined whether cultural background and societal influence moderated the effects of school-based discrimination on students' behavioural changes. This study focused on the Indian sample to understand how perceived teacher discrimination based on caste, creed and financial background of students may be associated with their behavioural changes.

In the present study, specifically, the empirical evidence that perceived discrimination by teachers (0.29) significantly affects students' behavioural changes suggests that higher discrimination strengthens behavioural changes in students. This finding is indicative of declining in students' interest to listen in the classes as a result of discrimination. Alfaro et al. (2009) proposed similar arguments by stating that students who suffered discrimination by teachers showed little interest in their studies, curiosity and perseverance. Additionally, discrimination also significantly affects students' interest to obey rules in the classroom. Smalls et al. (2007) established that discriminated students possibly exhibit truant behaviour at school. Discriminating behaviour is intolerable, even among educated professionals, and adversely affects student outcomes (Borrazzo, 2005; Haider and Hussain, 2014). Here, this finding contributes to the previous studies which reported that perceived discrimination by teachers is a basic determinant of behavioural changes in students (Huynh and Fuligni 2010; Jain and Narayan, 2011; Dupper et al., 2015). The exclusion and discrimination based on caste were also highlighted by Dostie and Jayaraman (2006). This kind of discrimination was also pointed out by Ramachandran and Naorem (2013) who highlighted segregated seating arrangements of backward and forward caste students in a classroom as an example of perceived teacher discrimination. Moreover, Kumar (2016) claimed that the humiliation and discrimination in schools based on the caste of the students was a reality in the Indian education system. Additionally, girls in the backward caste were considered as less fit to study (Kurian, 2015). Murray-Harvey and Slee (2007) and Stephan and Stephan (2013) argued that factors that profoundly affect students' psychological behaviour and learning originate from the discriminating attitude of teachers. However, the present finding is different from the findings by Bibi and Karim (2015) and Ali et al. (2019) where it was observed that students' learning outcomes and psychology were not influenced by teachers' perceived discrimination.

Moreover, regarding perceived teacher discrimination, this study empirically established that the association between students' behavioural outcomes and perceived discrimination was controlled by cultural background in a significant, but negative manner. This finding established that the effects of teachers' perceived discrimination on students' behaviour would be mitigated by cultural background. This outcome is consistent with Banerjee et al. (2018), who posited that the influence of perceived discrimination on academic performances of students was weakened by cultural socialization. The cultural background has been associated with better performance of school students. Assari and Caldwell (2018) reported that cultural socialization diminished the risk for greater behavioural changes in students due to experiencing discrimination in the classroom by teachers. The authors argued that individual and environmental intersection is required to comprehend the role of discrimination on students' behavioural changes (Chavous et al., 2008). Theoretical perspectives on socialization might facilitate our understanding of why cultural background may matter in the influences of

perceived discrimination on students' developmental results (e.g., perceived teacher discrimination on students' behavioural changes). Cultural background shapes socialization and the different levels of teacher-student interaction (Brown and Harris, 2012). School students receive negative perceptions through caste- and creed-based discrimination, but they receive positive perceptions through cultural background, resulting in positive outcomes (Banerjee et al., 2018). Previous studies suggest that family background or socioeconomic status (Assari and Caldwell, 2017; Hudson et al., 2012) and cultural background (Assari et al., 2015; Beatty Moody et al., 2016) change experience and sensitivity to perceived discrimination. Interpretation of unclear or arguable situations depends on various factors including cultural identity that shapes the prominence of culture in gradual encounters (Sellers et al., 2006). However, the present finding is different from previous studies that found no controlling consequence of cultural background in the association between students' academic outcomes and teachers' caste- and creed-based perceived discrimination (Neblett et al., 2006). Furthermore, the present results for societal influence was not significant, indicating that societal influence was less of a concern in the present sample. This could be because of a particular sample of the present dataset, where information was gathered from respondents of the same locality and ethnicity.

Conclusion

With the survey data collected from class 8 to class 10 students of rural and urban schools in Krishnagiri district of Tamil Nadu, India, the present study explored the effect of perceived discrimination by teachers based on students' caste, creed and financial background on their behavioural changes how this effect is strengthened in the presence of cultural background and societal influence. Overall, the present study revealed that perceived teacher discrimination significantly leads to negative behavioural changes in students when controlling for family background. Moreover, the present study identified the moderating effect of cultural background on the direct association between students' behavioural changes and teachers' perceived discrimination.

Implications

The present study offers valuable insights for theoretical implications and practical implications. The present study adds to the existing literature concerning the negative effect of perceived teacher discrimination on behavioural changes in school students. Despite prior studies having examined the conflict-inducing approach of teachers based on students' religion, socio-economic status, and gender (Neblett et al., 2006), few studies have analysed the discriminating approach of teachers towards behavioural changes in students with regards to their cultural background, societal influence and family background (Ali et al., 2019). The present study provides evidence that cultural background may buffer the negative behavioural outcomes for school students as a result of perceived teacher discrimination, suggesting that cultural socialization may balance the effects of discrimination in the school context. Besides, the present results indicate that family background may be associated with behavioural changes in students due to perceived discrimination. Schools might include educational practices with a focus on culture to mitigate discriminating behaviour among students and foster better psychological and academic outcomes.

Recommendations

Since the present findings reported that perceived teacher discrimination adversely affects students' behavioural changes, school authorities should emphasize sources that may lead to discriminating behaviour of teachers. Stricter actions towards intolerance to discrimination in

terms of termination, suspension, or demotion should be effective to regulate these sources. Several interventions should be implemented by school authorities to alleviate perceived teacher discrimination. Schools should prioritize a diverse workforce of teachers. Finally, training programs should be conducted to educate teachers to mitigate blunt reactions and better handle discriminating attitudes. Repeated mistreatment is considered to emotionally affect students (Baldwin and Baldwin, 1986). Although eliminating negative interactions between teachers and students seems unrealistic, bias in teachers' approach towards students could be mitigated.

Limitations and Future Research Directives

The present study emphasises on school-based students' perception of teacher discrimination and their views on their behavioural changes. Future research should consider the perceptions of teachers and parents to provide in-depth insights for understanding the impact of school-based perceived discrimination on students' behavioural outcomes and decrease the probability of bias in self-perceived response. In addition, the present study did not control for organizational and personal factors that could be a reason for perceived teacher discrimination. Future studies may emphasize additional factors, like institutional strategies, which tend to control the association between students' behavioural changes and teachers' perceived discrimination. This, in turn, would enable to comprehend framing institutional policies effective in regulating teachers' behaviour and attitude. Moreover, the cross-sectional aspect restricts the generalizability of findings as it provides an understanding of what is currently happening. Therefore, longitudinal studies should be conducted to understand the relationship between perceived teacher discrimination based on caste, creed and financial background and students' behavioural changes. Efforts must be made to understand how such a relationship is buffered by cultural-societal intersection and family background through different phases of the school level. A longitudinal study design on perceived discrimination might aid in understanding the nature and influence of the moderating factors.

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