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## Scalar Equivalence in Self-Rated Depressive Symptomatology as Measured by the Beck Depression Inventory-II: Do Racial and Gender Differences in College Students Exist?

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### ABSTRACT

Using item response theory and confirmatory factor analysis, the current investigation examined the equivalence in responses derived from the widely used 21-item Beck Depression Inventory-II (BDI-II; Beck, Steer, & Brown, 1996) among 1229 college students (mean = 21.15, SD = 6.19) in the United States. Results from differential item functioning analyses indicated that the items endorsed by Black American and White American college students were slightly different. However, items endorsed by female and male college students were almost invariant. The results of the study found partial support for using the BDI-II in college student populations. Directions for future culturally tailored assessment and research are proffered.

### KEYWORDS

Differential Item Functioning (DIF); Depression; Depressive Symptoms; Race; Gender; Scalar Equivalence; Item Response Theory (IRT); Confirmatory Factor Analysis; American College Students

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