

COVID-19 FEARS AND PUBLIC HEALTH REGULATIONS: WHO'S MOST STRESSED AND WHO'S MOST COMPLIANT? - EXPLORING GENDER AND RACIAL DIFFERENCES AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS

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Introduction

- Some of the well-intentioned and effective public health regulations designed to curb the spread of COVID-19 (e.g., social distancing) resulted in significant challenges for college students. For example, many students were forced to navigate abrupt changes to their learning and living arrangements, and as a result experienced increased depressive symptoms, anxiety, and stress (Cohen et al., 2020; Kecojevic et al., 2020).
- Research indicates that gender and race are independently related to perceived COVID-19-related stress and compliance with public health guidelines (Pedersen & Favero, 2020).
- Past studies, however, have generally failed to account for the role of intersectionality of gender *and* race-ethnicity (Gopaldas, 2013) when examining the implications of COVID-19.
- The goal of the present study was to determine whether combined race and gender subgroups differed on 3 COVID-related variables among a sample of college students: i) negative COVID-19 experiences, ii) COVID-19 stress. (contamination); and iii) Compliance with COVID-19 regulations.

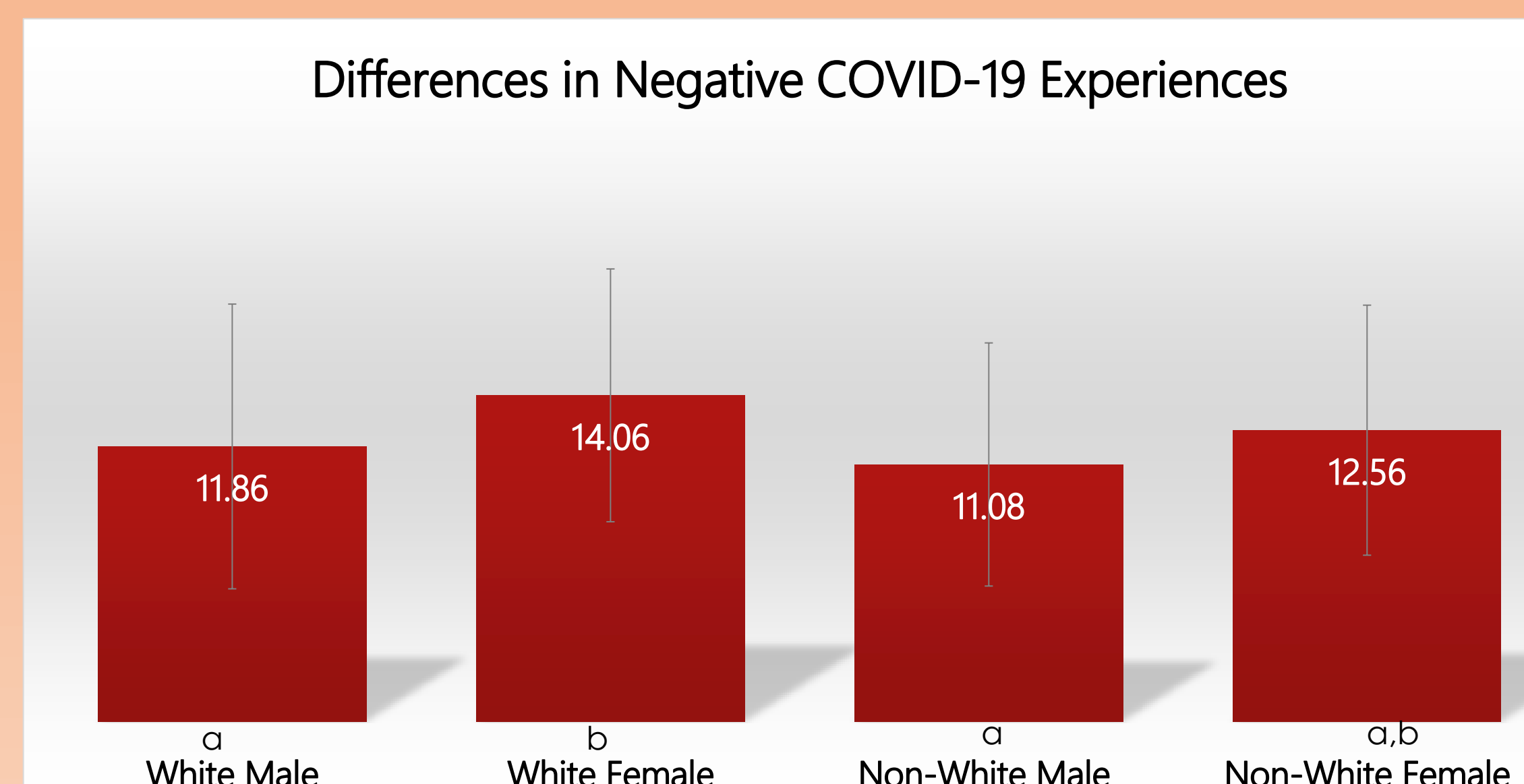
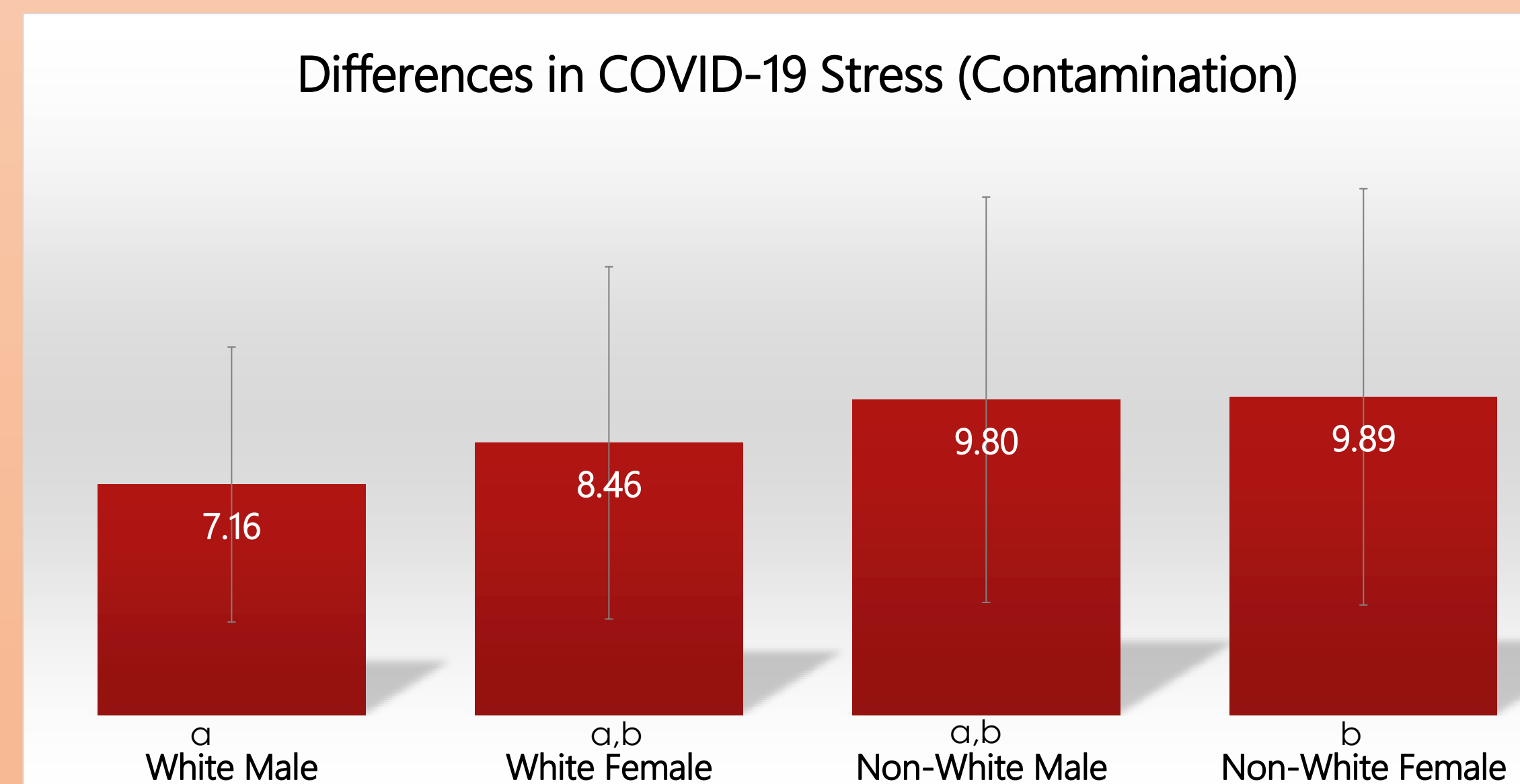
Participants

- N = 609 U.S.-based college students
- Age: Mean 21.79 years old ($SD = 2.15$)
- White female** (238, 39.1%), **Non-White female** (160, 26.3%), **White male** (125, 20.5%), **Non-White male** (86, 14.1%).

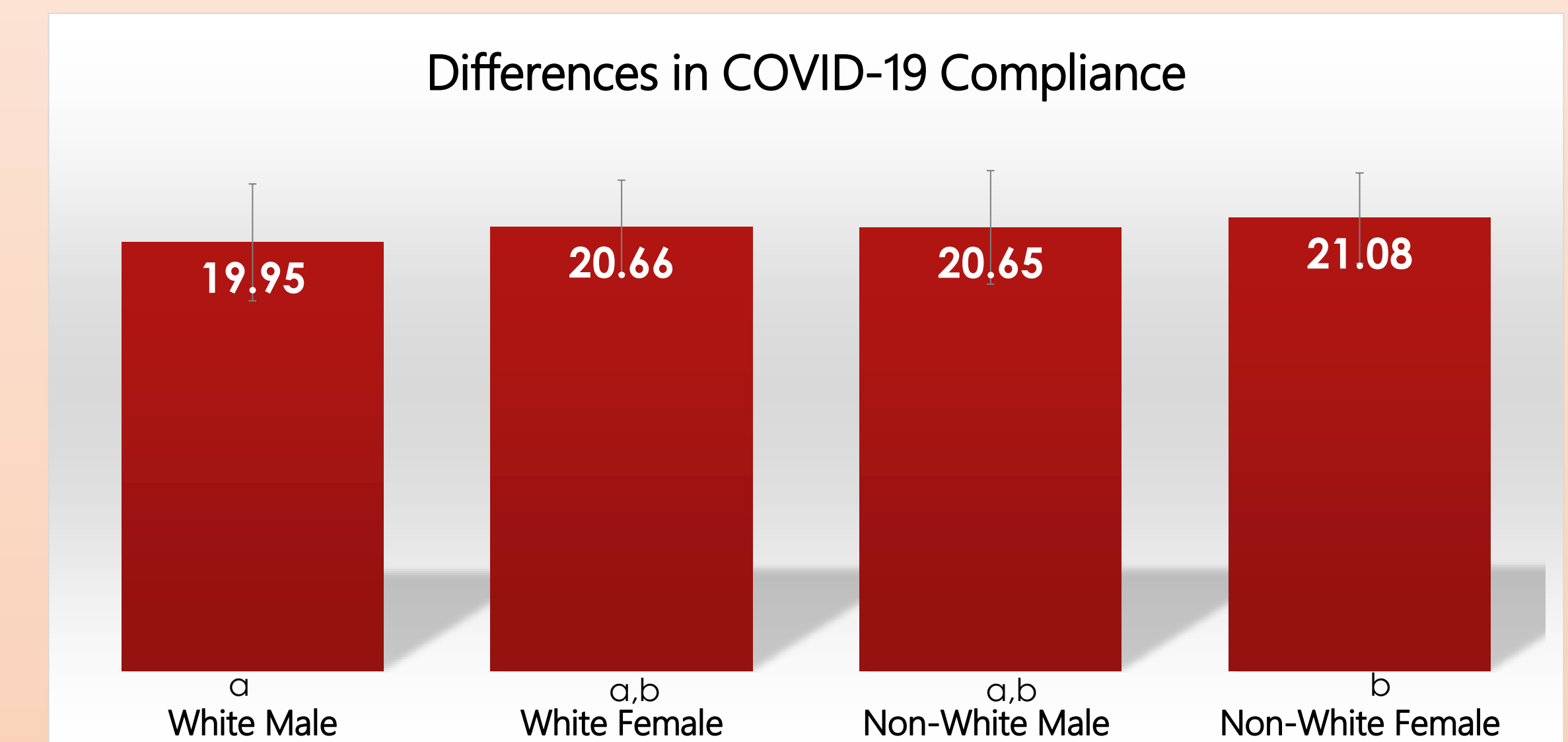
Measures

- Negative COVID-19 Experiences:** 19 items from the **Epidemic Pandemic Impacts Inventory** (Grasso et al., 2020); E.g., "Overeating or eating more unhealthy foods"
- COVID-19 Compliance Scale:** 6-items were created to assess compliance with COVID-19-related public health guidelines; E.g., "How often do you...Stay at least 6 feet away from others when in public."
- COVID-19 Stress (Contamination):** 6 items from the contamination subscale of the **COVID-19 Stress Scale**; E.g., "I am worried that people around me will infect me with the virus."

Results



Results



Discussion

- Higher negative COVID-19 experiences among **White females** may be due to loss of access to mental and physical health resources among those who were more likely to utilize such services prior to the pandemic (Eisenberg et al., 2009).
- Higher COVID-19 stress and COVID-19 compliance among **Nonwhite females** may represent higher vulnerability for this group because of increased exposure to the virus through living and working conditions.
- Future research is needed to further explore differences in COVID-19 stress and compliance measures among specific racial-ethnic minority groups.
- The intersectionality of other socio-demographic variables, such as sexual orientation and first-generation low-income status should be explored in future research.