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LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

AN INVESTIGATION OF RACIAL IDENTITY, SELF-ESTEEM AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AMONG AFRICAN AMERICAN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS

DEPARTMENT OF COUNSELING AND EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

BY

KAREN D. McCURTIS

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

JANUARY, 1994

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Traditionally, ethnic identity research has focused on outcome studies exploring differences in performances of students from varying backgrounds (Spencer, Swanson, & Cunningham, 1991). Mickleson (1990) reported that many studies have indicated that African American students "generally earn lower grades, drop out more often, and attain less education than do Whites" (p.44). Although there is considerable agreement that ethnic differences in school performance are genuine, there is little consensus about the causes of these differences (Steinberg, Dornbusch, & Brown, 1991). Among the explanations for the consistent and disturbing finding that academic performance of many African American students falls behind other groups are biological and environmental causes. Earlier research offered genetic inferiority of African Americans as explanations of lower academic school performance (e.g., Grubb, 1987; Mercer, 1988; Hoover, 1990). Because the genetic hypothesis has not been substantiated, more recent research has focused on environmental influences on achievement (e.g., Steinberg et al.). In particular, there

is virtually no disagreement among social scientists that family life plays a critical role in educational and social development (Clark, 1983).

Steinberg et al., (1991) examined the roles of parenting, familial values, and beliefs about rewards of success with approximately 15,000 students at nine different schools across several states in the United States. Unique to the experience of African American youngsters was the realization that the absence of peer support undermined the positive influences of authoritative parenting on student's school performance. This finding was important because studying the interplay of family, peer groups, and the school's culture surpassed previous attempts in trying to understand school performance by focusing on each variable in isolation from the other.

The recognition that the peer group is greatly influencing African American students is not a surprising finding in and of itself. After all, developmental theory consistently has talked about the importance of friends and peer acceptance during adolescent years. What research has failed to connect though, is that with African American adolescents, racial identity is intricately linked with the struggle for peer acceptance. Students from various ethnic backgrounds may experience some negative label for high academic achievement (e.g., brain, nerd, bookworm). Unique to the struggle for peer acceptance by African American

adolescents is the fear that peers will accuse them of not "being Black".

African American students who get good grades are often accused of trying to "act White" because performing well in school has been deemed as a "White behavior" by some peers. Some high achieving African American students have recently described the difficulties that they have faced with finding a non-supportive peer group (Gregory, 1992). These students reported being ostracized and ridiculed by their peers who assumed that these high achieving students were abandoning their culture, race, and community values.

One recent attempt to explain how African American students are able to achieve academic success is a qualitative investigation by Fordham (1988). The investigator suggested that in order for African American students to succeed in school, they must dissociate themselves from the African American community, it's values, beliefs, and customs, and embrace the school's culture. Fordham and Ogbu (1986) described this phenomena as "the burden of acting White"; they proposed that this problem arose partly because White Americans traditionally refused to acknowledge that African Americans were capable of intellectual achievement, and partly because African Americans began to doubt their own ability, to define success as the White person's prerogative, and to discuss peers from emulating White people--acting White. If the

dissonance between academic effort and peer acceptance becomes too much--the "burden of acting White" is too heavy a load to carry--the African American youth then chooses to identify with the Black community and consequently giving up or avoiding academic success.

Fordham's (1988) conclusions lead one to believe that an adolescent can not identify with the African American community and be a successful student. On the other hand, Ward (1990) found that racial identity, personal commitment, and academic achievement could be successfully converged during the high school years. In fact, the students in Ward's study reported being personally strengthened by their racial status, even as the pursuit of academic success continued.

These two studies, Fordham (1988) and Ward (1990) have yielded conflicting results regarding the relationship of racial group identity and high school achievement. Although both of these studies addressed the impact of the students race, neither of these studies utilized the prevailing theory of Black identity development, Cross (1971), nor did these investigations operationalize racial identity attitudes with the Racial Identity Attitude Scale (Parham & Helms, 1981), as derived from Cross's theory. These researchers provided qualitative data from only a total of thirteen participant interviews. Other variables such as self-esteem and self-concept were not measured, however,

these researchers appear to postulate that a relationship also existed among school achievement, self-esteem, and one's racial identity.

Few studies have examined the relationship between racial identity (i.e., the attitudes one holds about his or her Blackness) and school achievement. In a review of ethnic identity research with adolescents, Phinney (1990) recommended that future research discuss the implications of ethnic identity on psychological adjustment. Given the history of inferior academic achievement of African American students and the important role of education for advancement's in today's society, rigorous research is warranted to examine the relationship between academic success and racial identity.

The purpose of the present investigation was to explore the psycho-social-cultural variables affecting African American students' school performance. More specifically, a main objective was to examine the extent to which racial identity, self-esteem and academic concept could predict academic success for an African American high school student population. An additional objective of this investigation was to look at the interplay of family and peer support on school performance.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

The following literature is divided into several areas of research that was necessary to the formulation and investigation of the present study. These main areas include the following: school performance of African American high school students; the process of ego-identity formation in adolescence and related factors of self-concept and self-esteem; racial identity attitudes; the role of the African American peer group and family on academic success. This section ends with a conclusion and predictions based upon existing literature review.

School Performance of African American Students

Delpit (1988) describes "the culture of power" that exists in general society and in the educational environment in particular. The code of rules for educational environments relates to linguistic form, communicative strategies, and presentation of self. That is, ways of talking, ways of writing, ways of dressing, and ways of interacting are normatively based on Euro-American values. Katz (1985) concisely described core values of Anglo

American mainstream culture, including:

> rational, linear thinking, competition, action orientation, communication through standard English, written tradition, direct eye contact, limited physical contact, and control of emotions...(p. 618).

Delpit (1988) further contends that these values are institutionalized as school norms, they permeate the entire educational process, and they constitute the interactional criteria for success in school. Power (1985) asserted that during early adolescence the definitions of self either as a part of one's culture or separate from one's culture becomes the central task at this time and that schools may impede this process by treating the adolescent's culture as irrelevant to the educational process. When students' beliefs and standards don't coincide with those based on European standards, students may feel alienated and disengage themselves from the educative process.

According to Fordham (1988) the collective ethos of the fictive kinship system of Blacks is challenged by the individual ethos of the dominant culture when children enter school. The term fictive kinship "denotes a cultural symbol of collective identity among African Americans, and is based on more than just skin color" (p.56). Fordham also

suggests that fictive kinship system symbolizes Black American's sense of peoplehood in opposition to White American social identity. Fordham attempts to explain the origin of a fictive kinship by suggesting that Black Americans may have transformed White people's assumptions of Black homogeneity into a collective identity system. African psychology scholars, however, would probably challenge her analysis in that it her beliefs about the origins of a Black collective identity are based on Eurocentric assumptions. Wade Nobles (1980), a leading theorist in African Psychology, would probably challenge her conception of Black collective identity because her definition are derived only considering negative oppressive experiences of Blacks in America. A sense of collective Black identity, theorized would under the tenets of an Afrocentric model would probably trace positive features of basic African philosophy, which dictates the values, customs, attitudes, and behavior of the Black people, back to early African civilizations.

According to Fordham (1988) African American students inevitably experience a competition between the fictive kinship of Black Americans and the educational system for loyalty. Students who minimize their connection to the indigenous culture and assimilate into the school culture improve their chances of succeeding in school, unlike the students who seek their identification and affiliation with

Black culture. This deliberate coping strategy is termed developing a "raceless" persona.

Fordham (1988) observed how some African American students may function successfully in school. During the first year of the study Fordham observed students in and out of classrooms, and formally and informally interviewed students at a predominately Black public school in the District of Columbia. Although the students body is best characterized as poor, it includes working-class and middle-class students. The second year of the study was devoted to the administration of a 55-page, 201-item questionnaire to 600 students from various grades. Although, Fordham states that findings were compared to those obtained from the previous year, she only reports data on six of the high-achieving students interviews form which she develops her notion of "racelessness" coping.

Black children's performances in school reflects the groups marginality (Beale-Spencer & Kim, 1987). Several researchers (Jones, 1998; Cross, Parham, & Helms, 1991) have quoted W.E. Dubois in the Souls of Black Folks, to help us to understand this experience of marginality when he writes:

> It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eye's of others,...An American Negro; two warring ideals in one dark

> body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder (p. 45)

The struggle, too, is captured by Dubois:

> The history of the American Negro is the history of strife,---this longing to attain self-conscious manhood, to merge his [her] double self into a better and truer self. In this merging he wishes neither of the old selves to be lost...He simply wishes to make it possible for a man to be both Negro and American.. ...without having the doors of opportunity closed in his face (p. 214-215)

The result of this double-edged struggle, leads to what Jones (1988) called the bifurcation of self; or the insistence of American society that Black Americans choose one being over the other. "A graphic presentation of the bifurcation of self can be portrayed as the Oreo cookie metaphor--Black on the outside--white on the inside!" (Jones, 1988, p.5)

Murrel (1989) argues that the deliberate maintenance of two beings, where students learn to adapt to the school culture, yet and still connect with their ethnic cultural community, is important in achieving a healthy identity. This metastrategy of maintaining duality, where adopting the

ways of the school culture is a functional ploy, is a coping strategy called "resiliency". Murrell further contends that learning to pursue academic success while still embracing one's Blackness is a developmental process that may not be completed until early adulthood. Murrell investigated the change processes of 70 college students who were asked to reflect on their high school development and experiences in light of their current adjustment. Murrell (1989) found that students were able to learn ways in which their cultural experiences could shape learning interactions and reduce the tension associated with separate norms for school and community.

Racelessness as a coping strategy, while perhaps true for some students, may be only one side of the story. Fordham (1988) leads us to believe that it is the only way to cope if African American students want to succeed academically. However, Ward (1990) suggested another alternative for high achieving African American high school students. In interviews of approximately twenty students, Ward found that racial identity, personal commitment, and academic achievement were successfully converged during the high school years. The students that Ward interviewed reported feeling good about their race and personally strengthened by their racial status. Ward concluded that the African American adolescent must reject White society's negative evaluation and construct an identity that includes

one's Blackness as positively valued and desired.

A recapitulation of important considerations for African American school performance suggests that the process of finding a place where the student can identify with and feel a part of is a central task. While it seems necessary to reduce the conflict associated with community versus school identification for success performance, the need to identify with a group, bears light on developmental tasks of this age period. Ward (1990) maintains that if the process of positive identification is not completed and internalized, African American students will be at risk. Schools have to realize that the promotion of positive self-concepts may play a major role in the prevention of school failure and the promotion of academic achievement (Gurin & Epps, 1975; Pukey, 1970, as cited in Powell, 1985).

Ego-Identity Development and Self-Concept and Self-Esteem

The process of identity formation is determined by cognitive maturation, current situational factors, and previous socialization influences, along with the nature and quality of ego defenses (Spencer, 1988). One of the tasks of adolescence is to experiment with the various roles that the adolescent views her/him self as having. According to the theoretical formulation of Erikson (1968), every individual's struggle for ego synthesis is influenced by the concerns of their particular ethnic group or historical era.

The importance of race to one's identity development is revealed in a study by Aries & Moorehead (1989), who examined the ego-identity of 40 Black Senior high school students and found that ethnicity was most predictive of over all identity status and was seen as most important for self definition.

Spencer & Markstrom (1990) contend that in understanding the identity development of minority youth, the broader construct of ego-identity (which includes self-concept and self-esteem) needs to be investigated because traditional personality theorists (e.g. Erikson, 1968) concluded that oppressed individuals are expected to internalize negative images. Spencer and Markstrom (1990) allege that because available empirical evidence does not suggest that oppressed individual have internalized negative images, the process of identity formation may be more complex than previously thought.

According to Phinney's (1991) review of ethnic identity research, empirical investigations have yielded conflicting results regarding the relationship between self-esteem and ethnic identity. One consistent methodological concern was the measurement of ethnicity. Most researchers failed to provide a description of how ethnicity was defined. Racial identity developmental theories usually describe the process with subject who are young adults. Little is known about ethnic group identity before this developmental period.

Because researchers have often been the decider of which racial group a subject is assigned to, there is an assumption that subjects also identified with that particular racial group. Phinney offers that self-identification as a group member should be a prerequisite before ethnic identity is assumed to relate to other variable such as self-esteem.

McAdoo, states that "researchers keep replicating the same mistake of equating racial identity with self-esteem" (Raymond, 1991, p. 6). William Cross (1991) calls attention to this fact by analyzing the results of original data from the literature on Black identity from 1939 to 1967. Most of the studies interpreted their findings as if they had also measured elements of personality, such as self-esteem and self-hatred. Actually, only a few studies have actually employed separate tests of racial identity and personal identity (i.e., self-esteem and concept).

Parham and Helms have conducted several studies that suggest that the racial identity attitudes can also be linked to affective states, differing levels of self-esteem, and self-actualization. Parham and Helms (1985b) they found that preencounter and immersion-emersion attitudes were more indicative of lower self-esteem, and lower tendencies towards self-actualization.

Conversely, internalization attitudes most strongly linked with high levels of self-esteem and high levels of self-

actualization. Gay (1987) depicts the ideological changes in a person in who has a healthy racial identity:

> We know when we are in the presence of individuals who have clarified their Blackness and integrated it into their being, not so much by any specific, isolated behavior as by the sense of security, self-direction, confidence, assurance, and comfort with their ethnic selves they radiate. They neither apologize nor proselytize about their Blackness. They simply fuse it with all other dimensions of their being (p.64).

Researchers who have formalized developmental models of ethnic identity characterize the last stage as a healthy identity. It is what James Banks (1981) had described as "multiethnicity"; what Cross (1971, 1978, 1991) had describe d as "Internalization-Commitment", what Thomas and Thomas (1971) has called "transcendence", and what Gordon (1971) called "universality".

In summary, the developmental tasks of adolescence are important in the developing self-concept and self-esteem. Race seems to be a confounding variable on the already difficult processes and measurement of these constructs. Theoretically, ego-identity, self-esteem, and self-concept, are constructs that race would seem to influence; though,

researchers don't seem to be sure of the interrelatedness of all these variables. Nonetheless, racial identity is a separate entity that needs to be fully considered in and of itself.

Racial Identity

One of the most well known racial identity models is William Cross's Model of Psychological Nigrescence (1971, 1978). Cross (1978) defined psychological nigrescence as "the process of becoming Black". He described the model as an African American model for self-actualization under the conditions of oppression. Cross (1971) described the "Negro-to-Black" conversion experience by suggesting that the development of a Black person's racial identity is characterized by his/her movement through a four stage process.

Janet Helms and Thomas Parham have made important theoretical advances in the field of nigrescence by operationalizing attitudes from the various stages of racial identity development. Parham (1989) described how the stages of racial identity are manifested at three phases of life: early adulthood, midlife, and late adulthood. Each of the four stages are comprised of distinctive racial identity attitudes: cognitive, conative, and affective components (Parham & Helms, 1985).

The first stage, Pre-encounter, is characterized by

one's racial attitudes being primarily pro-White or anti-Black. The individual devalues his or her ascribed race and racial group in favor of Euro-American culture. The second stage, Encounter, begins when the individual has an experience that challenges his or her prior view of Blackness. The second phase occurs when the person first cautiously, then definitively, decides to develop a Black identity. The third stage, Immersion/Emersion, represents a turning point in the conversion from an old to a new frame of reference. This stage involves learning and experiencing the meaning and value of one's race and culture. At this stage, everything of value must be Black or relevant to Blackness. This stage is also characterized by the tendency to be pro-Black and anti-White. Stage four, Internalization, is the stage in which the individual achieves pride and security in his or her race and identity. This stage is also illustrated by psychological openness, ideological flexibility, and general decline of anti-white feelings, though Black reference groups remain primary.

The above descriptions characterize the original stages as defined by the Cross (1971, 1978) model. More recent developments in the model include the recognition that a person's initial identity state is not restricted to pre-encounter attitudes (Cross, Parham, & Helms, 1991). This assertion is a significant departure from the original nigrescence model which suggested that one's racial identity

development begins with a pro-White/anti-Black frame of reference. Another alternative to the original depiction of pre-encounter stage is the distinction between active and passive preencounter (Helms, 1990). While an active pre-encounter attitude might be devaluing his race and in turn embracing Euro American perspective a passive preencounter might show ambivalence to significance of race. In other words, race was not seen as relevant or a important factor to one's personal identity development.

Another important advancement in the articulation is that identity resolutions can occur in at least three ways: stagnation, that is, failure to move beyond one's initial identity state; stage wise linear progression, which is defined as movement from one identity state to another in sequential linear fashion; and recycling, which is the re-initiation into the racial identity struggle and resolution process after having gone through the identity process at an earlier stage in one's life. This recycling can be prompted by some significant life transition or change (Cross et al, 1991).

The Cross model originally was meant to discuss the development of Black identity within the context of a social movement from the late 1960's and early 1970's, rather than an evolution from adolescence through adulthood. Highlen et al., (1986) highlights a criticism of the Cross model in stating that the identity model may reflect elements

characteristic of a particular time (e.g., civil rights movement) rather than elements of a more universal process (cited in Myers, et al., 1991).

Contrary to the opinion stated above, in 1991 Cross asserted that:

> whether we talk about the new Negro in the 1920's, the Negro to Black metamorphisms in the 1970's, or the search for Afrocentricity in the 1990's, the five stages of Black identity development remain the same: Preencounter (stage 1) depicts the identity to be changed Encounter (stage 2) isolates the point at which the person feels compelled to change; Immersion-Emersion(stage 3) describes the vortex of identity change; and Internalization and Internalization-Commitment (stages 4 and 5) describes the habituation and internalization of the new identity (p. 190).

While some young black people have perceived Afrocentricity and Nigrescence being one in the same, Cross (1991) stated that the two paradigms should remain distinct because one (the nigrescence model) seeks to articulate and explain variability, while the other (Afrocentric models) seeks to delimit what should be called Black.

The advances made in operationalizing the Cross

(1971) model of psychological nigrescence by Parham & Helms (1981) have proven to be a much needed course of action. While there are many methodological concerns in studying racial identity, additional research should continue to examine racial identity in African Americans. This research is critical in helping to understand experiences and behaviors of Black people.

The African American Peer Group, Family, and Academic Success.

Particular to understanding school performance in African American high school students is the use of limited definitions of Blackness as a rationalization to succeed or not to succeed. Many talented Black students find that one of the most surprising source of obstacles to academic achievement is their peer group (Gregory, 1992). This problem is not an isolated one, according to parents, educators, and psychologists alike (McCalope, 1991). Some say the "fear of acting White" is one of the main reasons why Black students fail or underachieve. Fordham & Ogbu (1986) describe "the burden of acting White":

> Blacks believe that in order for a minority person to succeed in school academically, he or she must learn to think and act white...That is, striving for success becomes a subtractive process: the individual Black student following school standard

> practices that lead to academic success is perceived as adopting a white cultural frame of reference..."acting White" with inevitable outcome of losing his or her Black identity, abandoning Black people and Black causes, joining the enemy... (p.25-26).

The need to define their identity may lead Blacks to reject the values of achievement (Gregory, 1992); but according to Signithia Fordham in an interview, "this does not mean that they think being Black is only about failure, but more attuned to why it is they don't want to be White" (p. 45). This interpretation suggests that the need for African American students to be accepted by their peers and to avoid being labeled White, is more important value than academic success.

To further explore the anti-achievement ethic of the Black adolescent peer group, Kunjufu (1988) asked over 300 African American students if being smart is White, then what does Blackness mean. He found students had a very clear description of acting white (e.g., speaking proper English, particular style of dress, form of music, feeling superior, being a poor dancer), but they seldom said a person is acting White when he or she is smart. The students were also very ambiguous about Blackness (e.g., being yourself, using slang, being proud of your ancestors). Kunjufu (1988)

also found, contrary to previous findings, that the majority of students reported that their friends do encourage their academic activities (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; Fordham, 1988; Steinberg, Liederman, Landsman, & Clark, 1990;and Dornbusch, & Brown, 1991).

Practically all of the empirical research done to date has reported some statistically significant relationships between family background and achievement levels (Clark, 1991). A recent study on ethnic differences examined the roles of parenting, familial values, and beliefs about rewards of success with approximately 15,000 students at nine different high schools across the United States. Steinberg, Dornbusch, & Brown (1991) found that the benefits of authoritative parenting on school performance for African American students were offset by the lack of peer support for academic excellence. This was only the case in the African American sample. Steinberg, Dornbusch, & Brown (1991) reported that African American students face a quite a different situation because, although their parents were supportive of academic success, it was much more difficult to join a peer group that encouraged the same goal of academic excellence.

It is harder for some African American students to find peers who support their high academic performance because some African American adolescents perceive achieving good grades as White behavior. The complex factors impacting

African American high school achievement warrant further empirical investigation. A study utilizing all of the prevailing variables of racial identity, self-esteem, self-concept, and peer influence is needed to determine how these influential variables operate together and in various combinations.

Conclusion and Predictions

There are many factors to be considered when examining African American school performance. Conflicting values of mainstream school systems and Black community make it difficult for students to feel a part of the educative process. The monumental tasks of integrating the many aspects of self that make up one's identity is a difficult, but necessary task for all adolescents. Additionally, African Americans also must infuse their racial identity attitudes. This is particularly perplexing given the unsupportive nature of African American peer groups when high achieving student appear to conform to norms that are considered White by some. While supportive parents and encourage and facilitate academic excellence it seems that the pressure from the peer group remains a very powerful persuasion.

Based on the above extant literature related to African American school performance, the following variables of racial identity attitudes, self-esteem, academic self-

concept, and high school grades were utilized to test the following general predictions. Specific hypothesis are presented at the end of Chapter 3. First, it was predicted that internalization attitudes would predict higher levels of self-esteem, academic concept, and GPA. Secondly, it was predicted that preencounter and immersion-emersion attitudes would predict lower levels of self-esteem, academic self-concept, and GPA. These predictions were based upon research suggesting links between racial identity attitudes and self-actualization and self-regard (Parham & Helms, 1985a, and 1985b). Lastly, it was theorized that both peer and family support would be significant predictors of GPA, of which, peer support would be the stronger. This prediction focused on the literature on the role of the family and peer groups on school performance (Steinberg et al., 1991).

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Participants

Subjects were 86 African American high school students in Upward Bound programs at two medium size universities in the mid west. Project Upward Bound is a national pre-collegiate program funded by the United States Department of Education that has a curriculum designed to encourage the development of skills, motivation, and sophistication needed for success in education (K. Ingram, personal communication, January 25, 1993). Students chosen for Upward Bound must submit a high school transcript showing classes and grades with a 2.0 GPA. or higher and be a member of a low income family and/or will be a first generation college student upon graduation from high school.

Although all Upward Bound students were invited to participate in the study, only respondents who identified themselves as Black or African American were utilized in this study. No financial or credit incentives were offered for participating. The subject pool was 34.9% male (n=30) and 65.1 (n=56) female. Students were divided among class levels as follows: 25 were freshman (29.4%), 17 were

sophomores (20%), 29 were juniors (34.1%), and 14 were seniors (16.5%). All students were minors with the age range from 12 to 18 and average age of 15.4, S.D.=1.22. Only students whose parents returned consent forms participated in the study. See Appendix A for a copy of the parent consent form.

Procedure

Loyola University (Chicago, IL) Upward Bound students were introduced to the research study at parent orientation day. Parents were able to turn in consent forms to the investigator that day. Subsequently, parents who were not at the orientation were mailed consent forms with return envelopes. Students were administered surveys as a group at one of their weekly meetings. Students were given up to 45 minutes to answer items as thoroughly as possible. Follow-up phone calls were made to the parents of students who needed to complete Parent/guardian consent forms. Thirty-nine surveys were useable from Loyola's Upward Bound group, a 59% response rate.

Marquette University (Milwaukee, WI) Upward Bound students were given individual packets containing surveys and parent/guardian forms by Marquette Upward Bound administrators. The only directions given were to complete surveys as thoroughly as possible; total surveys should take less than 45 minutes to complete; and return completed

packet along with enclosed parent/guardian consent form to the MU Upward Bound Office. Forty-seven surveys were useable from Marquette's Upward Bound group, a 41% response rate; making a total of 86 subjects combined. Both Upward Bound Project administrators supplied final cumulative GPA's of participants to be used as a measure of school performance.

Instruments

Students completed the following questionnaires:

Student Questionnaire. A brief questionnaire was presented to respondents asking their age, gender, ethnicity/race, and class rank. In addition, respondents answered five open ended questions that were used to specifically assess the perceived conflict between being popular with the Black peer group or being smart (see Appendix B). These questions were adapted from an inventory that Kunjufu (1988) used on over 300 African American high school students. Only questions 3 and 4, pertaining to peer and family support, from the student questionnaire were utilized in analyzing this study. Guidelines for interpreting each question are offered by Kunjufu's (1988) To be Popular or Smart: The Black Peer Group.

Personal Orientation Inventory (POI)- Self Regard Subscale. The Personal Orientation Inventory (Shostrom, 1963) is a measure to assess self-actualization. The self-

regard subscale is a sixteen item scale that measures the degree of positive feelings an individual has due to sense of worth and strength; or self-esteem. The inventory consists of pairs of numbered statements from which participants choose the item that most consistently applies to them. Each question is assigned a point value (0 or 1), with possible total scores ranging from 0 to 16. The higher the score, the stronger the esteem. The test-retest reliability for the Self-Regard subscale has been found to be .71 (Parham & Helms, 1985a). Parham and Helms (1985a) found that positive scores on the Self-Regard subscale were negatively correlated with preencounter and immersion-emersion attitudes, and that encounter attitudes (as measured by the Racial Identity Attitude scale) were positively correlated with high scores of the Self-Regard subscale. See Appendix C for a copy of the Self-Regard subscale.

Academic Self-Concept Scale (ASCS). The ASCS was developed by Reynolds, Ramirez, Magrina, and Allen (1980) to assess how positively one feels about his/her academic ability. The ASCS consists of 40 statements with a 4-point Likert scale ranging from "1=strongly disagree" to "4=strongly agree", with no neutral point. Scores can range from 40 to 160; the higher the score, the stronger the level of academic self-concept. Reynolds, et al. reported an internal consistency of .91. The ASCS has been found to

correlate with grade point average; r=.40 - .52; SAT scores, r= .12 - .22; and the Rosenberg Self-Esteem scale, r = .45 (Reynolds et al., 1980). A copy of the ASCS can be found in Appendix D.

Racial Identity Attitude Scale (RIAS-short form B). The Racial Identity Attitude Scale (Parham & Helms, 1981) is a 30-item scale that measures attitudes associated with the Cross (1971) model of Black identity development, or Psychological Nigrescence (See Appendix E). This scale was developed from Hall, Cross, and Freedle's (1972) Q-sort procedure which asked subjects to sort cards that reflected attitudes at the various stages of racial identity.

Each RIAS item consists of statements to which participants responds how much that statement describes him or her using a five point Likert scale (1= "strongly disagree" to 5= "strongly agree"). There are four subscales, corresponding to the four stages of Black identity development (preencounter, encounter, immersion-emersion, and internalization). A mean scale score is computed for each stage by summing the responses to the item keyed in a particular subscale and dividing by the number of items in each subscale. Mean scale scores can range from 1 to 5, with 5 indicating the highest level of attitude. Parham and Helms (1981) originally intended for respondents to be placed into discreet stages according to the highest means scale score, however, they now (Parham & Helms, 1985)

advocate reporting participant's mean scale score for all stages in order to present the presence of continuous identity attitudes at each stage.

Internal consistency reliabilities for the subscales were found to be: Preencounter = .67; Encounter = .72; Immersion-Emersion = .66; Internalization = .71 (Parham & Helms, 1981). Ponterotto & Wise (1987) using oblique factor analytic methods and examining alternative factor solutions, found strong support for 3 of the 4 constructs described in the Cross (1971) model. They found little statistical support for the encounter stage as measured by the RIAS. Furthermore, some of the subscale intercorrelations were high enough to question the independence of the scale constructs. Despite these potential difficulties, there has been consistent evidence for the validity of the scale. Racial identity attitudes have predicted subject's preference for the race of their counselor (Parham & Helms, 1981); supported that emotional states, such as instability, would be associated with different stages (Parham & Helms, 1985a); and linked degrees of self-esteem to various racial identity stages (Parham and Helms, 1985b).

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were examined as a result of this study:

H_1: Internalization attitudes will have a significant positive correlation with POI.

H_2: Internalization attitudes will have a significant positive correlation with ASCS.

H_3: Internalization attitudes will have a significant positive correlation with GPA.

H_4: Immersion-Emersion and Preencounter attitudes will have a significant negative correlation with POI.

H_5: Immersion-Emersion and Preencounter attitudes will have a significant negative correlation with ASCS.

H_6: Immersion-Emersion and Preencounter attitudes will have a significant negative correlation with GPA.

H_7: Peer support and Family support will have a significant positive relationship with GPA.

H_8: Peer support will have a stronger correlation with GPA than Family support.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The purpose of this chapter is to present the results of the analyses that was performed on the data. Table 1 presents the means and standard deviations for the respondent's scores. The results are presented under the headings: (a) descriptive data on participants and instruments, and (b) the experimental hypotheses.

Descriptive Data

The total number of participants was 86; 39 were from Loyola University Upward Bound Program, and 47 from Marquette University Upward Bound Program. Of the 86 participants, 30 were males and 56 were females. The students classified themselves as 14 seniors, 29 juniors, 17 sophomores, and 25 freshman.

Table 1

Means and Standard Deviations for all Variables

Variables	Mean	SD	Potential Range	Obtained Range
GPA	2.51	.77	0.00 - 4.00	0.71 - 4.00
Pre	2.02	.52	1.00 - 5.00	1.00 - 3.67
Enc	3.32	.78	1.00 - 5.00	1.00 - 3.67
Imm	2.99	.69	1.00 - 5.00	1.25 - 4.75
Int	4.02	.44	1.00 - 5.00	2.78 - 5.00
ASCS	111.83	14.92	40.00 - 160.00	89.00 - 148.00
POI	11.98	2.16	1.00 - 16.00	5.00 - 16.00

An analyses of variance was conducted to assess for possible location, gender, and class differences on all predictor and criterion variables. There were no significant differences by location or class, however there were significant differences by gender. See Table 2 for a summary of ANOVAS for all variables by gender.

Gender was found to be related to GPA and Immersion. Planned Comparisons using Tukey's HSD indicated that women possessed higher GPA's than men (2.72 vs. 2.12; $F=5.99$, $p<.01$). However, men were found to indicate higher immersion ratings than women (3.25 vs. 2.86; $F=9.82$, $p<.01$). No other comparisons yielded significant results.

Table 2

Analysis of Variance for all Variables by Gender

Source	SS	F	p<
GPA	5.433	9.82	.003**
POI	.469	.098	.755
ASCS	1.77	.026	.871
Pre	.004	.013	.910
Enc	.677	1.14	.290
Imm	2.59	5.99	.017*
Int	.040	.198	.657

df=1 ** p<.01, * p<.05

Student responses to the question 3 "Does your family encourage your academic activities ?" and question 4 "Do most of your friends encourage your academic activities ?" on the student information survey were analyzed for content and placed into the following categories: 89.8% of the participants stated that "yes", their family encourages their academic activities, 4.5% said "no", that their parents did not encourage their academic activities, and 2.3% said that "sometimes" their parents encourage their academic activities, leaving 3.4 % who did not respond. For question 4 regarding peer support, 45.5% said "yes", my friends encourage my academic activities, 30.7% said "no", my friends do not encourage my academic activities, 11.4% said "sometimes" my friends encourage my academic activities, 9.1% said that "some of my friends" encourage my academic activities, and 3.4% did not respond.

Reliability coefficients were calculated for the RIAS subscales, and the ASCS inventory. The internal consistency measures for preencounter, encounter, immersion-emersion, and internalization were .53, .42, .64, and .44, respectively. The Cronbach alpha calculated for ASCS was .90. Because the POI was a dichotomously scored survey, no internal consistency measure of POI was performed.

The correlation matrix of the predictor and criterion variables is displayed in Table 3.

Table 3

Correlation Coefficients for all Variables

	GPA	Pre	Enc	Imm	Int	ASCS	POI	Famsprt	Peersprt
GPA	--	-.1193	-.2751*	-.3147**	-.0357	.3702**	.0189	-.1196	-.0400
Pre			-.0067	-.1798	-.2684*	-.1916	-.0401	.0686	.1031
Enc				.6662**	.5153**	-.1192	.0514	.0879	-.0410
Imm					.4801**	-.1693	-.0682	.0332	.1517
Int						.1514	.1865	-.1261	-.1342
ASCS							-.3668**	.0271	-.0496
POI								-.1801	-.1435
Famsprt									.1108
Peersprt									--

* p< .05; ** p< .01 (2-tailed)

Note: RIAS Stages= Pre (Preencounter); Enc (Encounter); Imm (Immersion); Int (Internalization)

GPA had a significant negative correlation with Encounter attitudes and Immersion-Emersion attitudes and a positive significant correlation with ASCS. Preencounter attitudes were negatively correlated with Internalization attitudes. Encounter had a positive significant correlation with Immersion-Emersion and Internalization. Immersion-Emersion had a positive significant correlation with Int. ASCS and POI were significantly correlated in a positive direction. No variables were significantly correlated with Family support and Peer support.

Hypotheses

Because the purpose of the study was to identify significant predictors from a pool of variables, simultaneous multiple regression was conducted for each of the three independent variables (GPA, ASCS, POI). Encounter attitudes were not used in the regression equation because of the controversy of the subscales' instability, small number of items that comprise the subscale, and consistent low reliability coefficients reporting for the subscale. Demographic variables of gender, location, class, and age also were not used as predictor variables. However, because an analysis of variance revealed significant differences on Immersion-Emersion attitudes and GPA scores by Gender, an individual regression plot of GPA with Gender was conducted [$r=.37$, $R^2= .14$, $p<.001$]. 14% of the variability in GPA

scores can be explained by Gender.

The results will first be discussed in terms of general findings, then, each hypothesis will be examined for supporting statistical evidence. The best predictor model for GPA was Immersion-Emersion attitudes and academic self-concept. Table 4 presents the results of the simultaneous regression for GPA. Together Immersion-Emersion and ASCS accounted for 26% of the variance in GPA scores [$F(7,68)=3.42$, $R^2=.26$, $p<.01$]. Immersion-Emersion attitudes had an inverse relationship with GPA, thus, as Immersion-Emersion attitudes increases, the student's GPA lowered. ASCS and GPA had a positive relationship, thus, the higher the ASCS, the higher the GPA.

Table 4

Summary of Regression Analysis for GPA

Variable	R^2	Beta	T	p<
Pre	.00	-.071	-.635	.5276
Imm	.14	-.378	-2.86	.0056**
Int	.02	.133	.975	.3328
ASCS	.13	.362	3.03	.0035**
POI	.03	.183	-1.51	.1366
Famsprt	.02	-.154	-1.43	.1580
Peersprt	.00	.051	.465	.6431

** p<.01

Simultaneous regression also revealed that GPA and self-esteem represented the best model for predicting ASCS (See Table 5). Together these variables accounted for 32% of the variance in ASCS scores [$F(5,73)=6.86$, $R^2=.32$, $p<.001$]. The direction of the relationship was positive; as GPA and POI increased so did ASCS.

Table 5

Summary of Regression Analysis for ASCS

Variable	R^2	Beta	T	p<
Pre	.02	-.126	-1.24	.2190
Imm	.00	-.061	-.483	.6302
Int	.01	.076	.618	.5383
POI	.14	.378	3.70	.0004**
GPA	.11	.332	3.18	.0022**

** p<.01

Simultaneous regression revealed that Internalization attitudes and academic self-concept represented the best predictor model for self-esteem. Together these variables accounted for 25% of the variance in POI scores [$F(5,73)= 4.75$, $R^2= .25$, $p<.001$]. The direction of the relationship was positive; as Internalization attitudes and ASCS increased, so did POI.

Table 6

Summary of Regression Analysis for POI

Variable	R^2	Beta	T	p<
Pre	.00	.069	.647	.5194
Imm	.06	-.238	-1.84	.0701
Int	.08	.276	2.19	.0314*
ASCS	.18	.419	3.70	.0004**
GPA	.04	-.193	-1.67	.0984

** p<.01, * p<.04

The results indicate to not reject null H_1 to H_3 because Internalization attitudes did not have a significant positive correlation with POI, ASCS, or GPA. Internalization attitudes were able to predict higher POI, but could not significantly predict ASCS or GPA. Internalization attitudes were found to have a nonsignificant negative correlation with GPA.

The results indicate to not reject null H_4 and H_5. Immersion-Emersion and Preencounter attitudes were negatively related to POI and ASCS, but it was insignificant. However, the results did indicate to partially reject the null H_6. As hypothesized, Immersion-Emersion attitudes were found to have a significant negative relationship with GPA ($r=-.31$, $p<.01$). As predicted, Immersion-Emersion attitudes were able to significantly predict GPA. The direction of the relationship, negative, was also supported. There was no significant relationship with Preencounter and GPA, nor was Pre able to predict GPA, ASCS, and POI.

The results indicated to not reject the null H_7 and H_8. Neither Family support or Peer support contributed significantly to the predictor model for GPA. Unexpectedly, Family support and Peer support were not significantly related to GPA [$r= -.11$, $-.04$ (respectively), N.S.], and the direction of the relationship was negative.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to examine the extent to which racial identity, self-esteem, and academic concept could predict school performance for an African American high school student population. The results as they relate to the hypothesis, as well as relevant literature will be presented in this section. Limitations of the study and implications for future research will also be discussed.

Racial Identity Attitudes and Dependent Variables: GPA, ASCS, and POI

It was hypothesized that Internalization attitudes would have a significant positive correlation with POI, ASCS, and GPA, respectively. Internalization attitudes were able to predict POI, but not ASCS and GPA. This finding supports the results of a previous investigation that found Immersion-Emersion attitudes to be a significant positive predictor of self esteem (i.e., Parham & Helms, 1985a).

The results showed no support for the hypothesis that Immersion-Emersion and Preencounter attitudes would be negatively related to POI. Although it was not anticipated, this finding should not be surprising given that Cross

(1991) provides a comprehensive review of the general literature on Black identity written between 1939 and 1980 and found that 38 out of 45 studies found that no overall positive linear correlation between personal identity (i.e., self concept) and reference group orientation (i.e., racial identity).

The results also indicated no support for the hypothesis that Immersion-Emersion attitudes would be significantly related to ASCS. Likewise, preencounter attitudes did not predict GPA, ASCS, and POI. This last finding is inconsistent with previous research (Parham & Helms, 1985a; Butler, 1975, Cross, 1971) that suggests that preencounter attitudes were related to feelings of inferiority, inadequacy, and lack of self-acceptance.

It is important to recognize that the findings of the present investigation were based on students in a different developmental stage than the previously cited research for comparisons. That is, Parham & Helms (1985) used a college age population to predict self-esteem with the various RIAS attitudes. The present investigation did replicate the results in finding that lower self-esteem was associated with Immersion-Emersion attitudes, and that Internalization was associated with higher levels of esteem. However, the present results the did not hold true for Black high school students with Preencounter and Encounter attitudes. It may also be that the this group of students who exhibited

preencounter attitudes did not exhibit feelings of inferiority because they were using "racelessness coping" as described by Fordham (1988). That is, because these students believe that they had to give up their racial identification with other Blacks and take on mainstream values, and "act White enough to be rewarded by White institutions like schools" (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986, p.25) they may maintain a higher academic self-concept than the student who is struggling with the dissonance that exists between his/her Blackness and the politics of academia. It would be seemingly more difficult for a student to have high academic self-concept when he/she believes that he can not be both high achieving and African American. This is a speculation of course, because the study did not explicitly measure the dilemma between being both high achieving and African American.

Partial support was shown for the hypothesis that Preencounter and Immersion-Emersion attitudes would be negatively related to GPA. Although there was no significant relationship with Preencounter and GPA, as hypothesized, Immersion-emersion was found to have a significant negative relationship with GPA ($r=-.31$, $p<.01$). Simultaneous regression also revealed that Immersion was a significant predictor of GPA. Immersion and GPA were negatively related, as predicted. "Coping strategies that seemingly correspond to the Immersion-Emersion phase appear

to occur quite often during Black adolescence (Helms, 1990) who find themselves adrift in White educational systems" (p.27). The more students held Immersion-Emersion attitudes, the lower their GPA.

Immersing oneself in Black culture is a very central part of Immersion-emersion stage. Lower grades may result from what Latimier (1986) described as Black Student avoidance of certain academic endeavors in which they were obviously talented (e.g., journalism, sailing, etc.) in favor of "hanging out" because the latter was accepted as "Black" behavior whereas the former were not. Gregory (1992) and McCalope (1991) further reiterate this point in explaining the fear that some African American students have that their academic related events will be associated with White behavior. Lower grades may also be a function of teachers' responses to the Immersion-Emersion student. The stage itself is characterized by a generalized anger towards Whites because of their role in oppression, and at other Blacks whose eyes have not been "properly opened" yet (Helms, 1990). The results of the present study showed that men carried Immersion-Emersion attitudes significantly more than women. Our societal response to an angry Black male may operate in the form of not inviting him to fully participate in the learning environment, and his withdrawal from the environment resulting in lower grades. Perhaps adding additional confirmation to this hypothesis, is the

finding that the female gender was found to be a significant predictor of higher GPA.

Family Support and Peer Support

It was hypothesized that family support and peer support would be significantly related to school performance. It was further postulated that peer support would have a stronger relationship to GPA than family support. Neither Family support nor Peer support contributed significantly to the predictor model for GPA. Unexpectedly, there was no significant correlation between Peer support and GPA ($r= .03$, N.S.), and further, Family support and GPA were negatively correlated ($r= -.28$, $p<.05$). While it discouraging to entertain the notion that the more family support a student receives, the lower the students grades, it may not be totally inconsistent with that developmental period. There tends to be an inverse relationship, between age and parental influence; as age increases, parental influence declines (Kunjufu, 1988).

An alternative explanation of these results may be that although the student's reported that their parents encouraged their academic behaviors, perhaps the encouragement was perceived as not helpful (e.g., nagging to do homework) or even negative. Although the questions regarding peer and family support were open ended questions, students did not provide much detail beyond denoting the

presence or absence of parent or peer support. The content of the answers were analyzed for categories of response since the other supporting information was not that detailed. Perhaps turning the Peer support and Family support into categorical measures contributed to the lack of statistical support for these variables, especially considering that all the criterion variable of school performance as measured by GPA was continuous.

Limitations of Present Study

The population sample were all recruited from two Upward Bound programs; this particular environment may have had an effect on the results found. For example, in explaining the finding that close to half (45.5 %) of the group reported that their friends supported their academic endeavors. This finding it somewhat surprising in lieu of other research findings (e.g., Gregory, 1992; McCalope, 1991; and Steinberg et al., 1992) suggesting that it is difficult for African American students to find peers who are supportive of academic endeavors. It may be that this sample of high school students was surrounded by more friends who readily support academics because of the nature of the Upward Bound program whose goals are to bring together students with the aim of providing support services that would enable them to succeed in college. Therefore, generalizability to the wider African American high school

student population at large is limited.

The next limitation, then, is the wording of questions 3 and 4 on the student questionnaire. Question 3 asked "Does your family encourages your academic endeavors" and question 4 asked "Do most of your friends encourage your academic endeavors". These questions were taken directly from the questionnaire that Kunjufu (1988) used. It appears that the wording were not particularly conducive to eliciting explanatory responses from the student. Perhaps the questions could have been modified so that the student could not simply answer yes or no. The questions could have also included a qualifier that asked students to explain how their friends or family encouraged their academic endeavors. Lastly, the question regarding friends was a loaded question that limited the students' responses by asking if, "most" rather than allowing the student report quantity themselves. This question could be interpreted as leading the respondent to answer the question in a specific direction.

Another limitation of the study is that the students are never asked directly if they perceived a conflict between being African American and getting good grades. Although the some of the qualitative data pertaining to other questions on the open-ended section certainly suggest that this phenomena may be operating, the investigator assumed that this dilemma existed. Although this was not an explicit goal of the present study, this information may

have proved helpful in interpreting the results. Another fault, then, of this investigation is the inability of the researcher to articulate the dilemma that these African American students may face as they proceed through school. The use of cumulative GPA as the only outcome variable for school performance is also problematic because it is such a distal measure. Perhaps more proximal variables, e.g., like classroom behavior, time spent on homework, amount of preparation for exams, might have yielded a better assessment of school performance.

The small total N for the study is a limitation, although there were enough participants to meet minimal requirements of 10 to 12 participants per predictor variable in regression analysis. Because the instruments used in the study were normed on college age population, the reliability coefficients for the POI, .54 were low in comparison to previous findings (Shostrom, 1963). The Cronbach alpha for ASCS was consistent with other reportings of .90. Whether the RIAS can be appropriately used to assess the identity of non-college populations remains to be determined (Helms, 1990). Although the RIAS is written at an eighth grade reading level, the reliability coefficients calculated for the subscales brings into question whether it is a valid measure for high school students. Cronbach alpha's were found to be .53, .42, .64, .44, for preencounter, encounter, immersion-emersion, and internalization, respectively.

These reliability coefficients were considerably lower to previous findings for college students (Parham & Helms, 1981; Ponterotto & Wise, 1987). No comparison for use with high school student were available. However, the subscale intercorrelations offer some validity that the scale may be conceptually a valid measure. The highest positive correlation is between Encounter and Immersion attitudes ($r = .67$, $p < .01$); although this high intercorrelation has caused some to question the independence of the two stages (Ponterotto & Wise, 1987), Helms (1990) asserted that this relationship is consistent with the theoretical descriptions of the respective stages. Encounter is the attitude that must exist before one can enter the next stage Immersion-Emersion. In addition, preencounter attitudes were found to be negatively correlated with the other three types of attitudes: Encounter ($r=-.006$), Immersion-Emersion ($r=-.18$), Internalization ($r= -.27$). Helms (1990), asserted again these relationships are consistent with theoretical descriptions of the relevant stages, in that preencounter attitudes are conceptual opposites in beliefs about Blacks as well as Whites. The insignificant correlations between, Internalization, Preencounter, and Immersion-Emersion attitudes also can be interpreted as support that these attitudes as representing conceptually different stages. Similar correlations have been reported by Parham and Helms (1981), Carter (1984), and Grace (1984).

Previous research in ethnic identity development has been criticized for the lack of reliable and valid measures of identity development (Phinney, 1991). Two key studies that were used in formulating the present research question criticized the authors for not explicitly stating how they defined racial identity through their interviewing process. Although the RIAS certainly has had its' critics (i.e., Nobles, 1989; Speight, Myers, Cox, & Highlen, 1991) regarding the conceptualization of racial identity attitudes only in relation to racial oppression, the RIAS was chosen in the present investigation because it is one of few measures that have actually operationalized racial identity development and that fact that it has been widely used in the last twenty years.

Suggestions for Future Research

The aim of this investigation was to build a predictor model for GPA, self-esteem, and academic self-concept. In spite of the lack of significant results to support all of the hypotheses, this investigation has many implications for future research. Given the troubling findings about gender differences in achievement, research is warranted that looks at the different ways that Black male and female students are coping in high schools.

Future investigations of racial identity attitudes should continue to employ a high school student sample.

Further refinement of the RIAS is in order given the low reliabilities found in this investigation. Subjects from the group administration also commented that the some of the wording was outdated (e.g., "pig", "the man"). A promising new development on the scale could include updating the terminology to reflect this social era, as the scale is over 20 years old.

Future studies are needed to clarify the relationship between self concept and racial identity and the measures that are used to assess the relationship. In addition, the dilemma that some African American students face of being perceived as "sell-outs" for performing well in school needs further examination. Further qualitative analysis can helps distinguish the many factors that are a part of the dilemma of being both Black and high achieving.

Finally, researchers must remember that the African American's life "is experienced as a dialectical matrix of dynamic forces and is shaped by the interaction of many different modes of expression" (Gay & Baber, 1987, p.4) There are some students that have obviously developed anti-achievement ethics to try and maintain some sense of Blackness. "Positive self-identity is not easily attained in this culture. This premise is supported by the pervasive number of "isms" (e.g. racism, sexism, heterosexism, ageism) and there adverse impact on those who are defined as inferior by the dominant ways of perceiving" (Myers et al,

1991, p.54-55). Yet, there are also those students who manage to negotiate the barriers that educational systems can some time create and develop positive healthy Black identities in the process.

An implication of this study is the suggestion that while raceless coping may be active in some high school students, perhaps none of the students in this investigation were using racelessness notion of coping. It would follow that students with preencounter attitudes would probably choose to use raceless coping because of their self-hatred, and likelihood to want to dissociate from the African American community. Yet, Preencounter attitudes were not significant predictors of school performance. Further, this study had students with positive Black identity and good grades. The most important finding of this study is the counter-argument to the claim that studies have found conflicting results about racial identity. Some studies have suggested that Blacks have to give up their racial identification with Blacks in order to succeed (Fordham, 1988), while other studies have found that pride in their race strengthened students and helped them to achieve academic success (Ward, 1990). The present investigation implies that neither of these results are wrong, but that the differing racial identity attitudes which African American students hold are significantly related to their school performance. A profile of high achieving African

American student would probably have higher levels of internalization attitudes. Students with lower GPA's would probably have higher levels of Immersion-Emersion attitudes. The variety of RIAS attitudes actually exist within the high school student population and perhaps the Fordham (1988) and the Ward (1990) study really tapped into students holding a preponderance of one RIAS attitude or another.

The implication of these findings, that there are within group differences in racial identity attitudes of African American high school students may explain the varied ways that students perform in school. Perhaps with continued research interventions could be developed aimed at helping all African American students succeed academically.

APPENDIX A

PARENT/GUARDIAN CONSENT FORM

Project Title:
"An investigation of racial identity, self-esteem, and academic achievement with African American high school students"

I, _____, the parent or guardian of _____, a minor of _____ years of age, hereby consent to her or his participation in a research project being conducted by Suzette L. Speight, Ph.D. of Loyola University Chicago.

Description of procedure:

The investigation involves the one time only completion of five (5) questionnaires ask about racial identity attitudes, self-esteem, and possible conflict between being popular and being smart. All responses are confidential and anonymous, no identifying information will be collected. This study will help us to understand more about factors that influence academic achievement of African American high school students so that strategies can be suggested to parents, counselors, and teachers. If there are any questions regarding this investigation, please contact Dr. Speight at 312-915-6034.

I understand that no risk is involved and that I may withdraw my child from participation at any time.

_____
(Signature of parent/guardian)

_____
(Date)

APPENDIX B

STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Age: _____ Race: _____

Circle one:

Gender: Male Female

Class Rank: Freshman Sophomore Junior Senior

1) How does a Black person act White ?

2) How does a Black person act Black ?

3) Does your family encourage your academic activities ?

4) Do most of your friends encourage your academic activities ?

5) What do you want to be when you grow up ?

APPENDIX C

PERSONAL ORIENTATION INVENTORY

Directions:

This inventory consists of pairs of numbered statements. Read each statement and decide which of the two paired statements have most consistently applies to you. Circle that statement.

1. a. I am afraid to be by myself.

   b. I am not afraid to be by myself.

2. a. I sometimes feel embarrassed by compliments.

   b. I am not embarrassed by compliments.

3. a. It is possible to live life in terms of what I want to do.

   b. It is not possible to live life in terms of what I want to do.

4. a. I can cope with the ups and downs of life.

   b. I can not cope with the ups and downs of life.

5. a. I live in terms of my wants, likes, dislikes, and values.

   b. I do not live in terms of my likes, dislikes, and values.

6. a. I trust my ability to size up a situation.

   b. I do not trust my ability to size up a situation.

7. a. I believe I have an innate capacity to cope with life.

   b. I do not believe that I have an innate capacity to cope with life.

8. a. I often feel it necessary to defend my past actions.

   b. I do not feel it necessary to defend my past actions.

9. a. It is important that others accept my point of view.

   b. It is not necessary for others to accept my point of view.

10. a. I feel free to be by myself and bear the consequences.

    b. I do not feel free to be by myself and bear the consequences.

11. a. Self-interest is natural.

    b. Self-interest is unnatural.

12. a. I am assertive and affirming.

    b. I am not assertive and affirming.

13. a. It is a good idea to think about your greatest potential.

    b. A person who thinks about one's greatest potential gets conceited.

14. a. I am self-sufficient.

    b. I am not self-sufficient.

15. a. I feel certain and secure in my relationships with others.

    b. I feel uncertain and insecure in my relationships with others.

16. a. I can feel comfortable with less than perfect performance.

    b. I feel uncomfortable with anything less than perfect performance.

APPENDIX D

ASCS/Reynolds

SCHOOL ATTITUDE SURVEY

Listed below are a number of statements concerning school related attitudes. Rate each item as it pertains to you personally. Base your ratings on how you feel most of the time.

INDICATE THE RESPONSE BY CIRCLING THE APPROPRIATE LETTER. Be sure to answer all items. Also try to respond to each item independently, do not be influenced by your previous choice. Use the following scale to rate each statement:

A. Strongly disagree B. Disagree C. Agree D. Strongly agree

1.	Being a student is a very rewarding experience.	A B C D
2.	If I try hard enough, I will be able to get good grades.	A B C D
3.	Most of the time my efforts in school is rewarded.	A B C D
4.	No matter how hard I try I don't do well in school.	A B C D
5.	I often expect to do poorly on exams.	A B C D
6.	All in all, I feel I am a capable student.	A B C D
7.	I do well in my courses given the amount of time I dedicate to studying.	A B C D
8.	My parents are not satisfied with my grades in school.	A B C D
9.	Others view me as intelligent.	A B C D

10.	Most courses are very easy for me.	A B C D
11.	I sometimes feel like dropping out of school.	A B C D
12.	Most of my classmates do better in school than I do.	A B C D
13.	Most of my instructors think that I am good student.	A B C D
14.	At times I feel school is too difficult for me.	A B C D
15.	All in all, I am proud of my grades in school.	A B C D
16.	Most of the time while taking a test I feel confident.	A B C D
17.	I feel capable of helping others with their class work.	A B C D
18.	I feel teachers' standards are too high for me.	A B C D
19.	It's hard for me to keep up with my class work.	A B C D
20.	I am satisfied with the class assignments that I turn in.	A B C D
21.	At times I feel like a failure.	A B C D
22.	I feel I don't study enough for a test.	A B C D
23.	Most exams are easy for me.	A B C D
24.	I have doubts that I will do well in school.	A B C D
25.	For me, studying hard pays off.	A B C D
26.	I have a hard time getting through school.	A B C D
27.	I am good at scheduling my study time.	A B C D
28.	I have a fairly clear sense of my academic goals.	A B C D
29.	I'd like to be a much better student than I am now.	A B C D
30.	I often get discouraged about school.	A B C D
31.	I enjoy doing my schoolwork.	A B C D
32.	I consider myself a very good student.	A B C D

33. I usually get the grades I deserve in courses. A B C D

34. I do not study as much as I should. A B C D

35. I usually feel on top of my work by finals. A B C D

36. Others consider me a good student. A B C D

37. I feel that I am better than the average student. A B C D

38. In most of the courses, I feel that my classmates are better prepared than I am. A B C D

39. I feel that I don't have the necessary abilities for certain courses in my major. A B C D

40. I have poor study habits. A B C D

APPENDIX E

THE RACIAL IDENTITY ATTITUDE SCALE (RIAS-SHORT FORM B)

This questionnaire is designed to measure people's social and political attitudes. There are no right or wrong answers. Use the scale below the scale below to respond to each statement. Place the numerical value that corresponds with your response in the space provided next to the statement.

1	2	3	4	5
strongly disagree	disagree	uncertain	agree	strongly agree

_____ 1. I believe that being Black is a positive experience.

_____ 2. I know through experience what being Black in America means.

_____ 3. I feel unable to involve myself in white experiences and am increasing my involvement in Black experiences.

_____ 4. I believe that large numbers of Blacks are untrustworthy.

_____ 5. I feel an overwhelming attachment to Black People.

_____ 6. I involve myself in causes that will help all oppressed people.

_____ 7. I feel comfortable wherever I am.

_____ 8. I believe that White people look and express themselves better than Blacks.

_____ 9. I feel very uncomfortable around Black people.

_____ 10. I feel good about being Black, but I do not limit myself to Black activities.

_____ 11. I often find myself referring to White people as honkies, devils, pigs, etc.

_____ 12. I believe that to be Black is not necessarily good.

_____ 13. I believe that certain aspects of the Black experience apply to me, and others do not.

_____ 14. I frequently confront the system and the man.

_____ 15. I constantly involve myself in Black political and social activities (art shows, political meetings, Black theater, etc.)

_____ 16. I involve myself in social action and political groups even if there are no other Blacks involved.

_____ 17. I believe that Black people should learn to think and experience life in ways that are similar to White people.

_____ 18. I believe that the world should be interpreted from a Black perspective.

_____ 19. I have changed my style of life to fit my beliefs about Black people.

_____ 20. I feel excitement and joy in Black surroundings.

_____ 21. I believe that Black people come from a strange, dark, and uncivilized continent.

_____ 22. People, regardless of their race, have strengths and limitations.

_____ 23. I find myself reading a lot of Black literature and thinking about being Black.

_____ 24. I feel guilty and/or anxious about some of the things I believe about Black people.

_____ 25. I believe that a Black person's most effective weapon for solving problems is to become part of the White persons's world.

_____ 26. I speak my mind regardless of the consequences (e.g., being kicked out of school, being imprisoned, being exposed to danger).

_____ 27. I believe that everything Black is good, and consequently, I limit myself to Black activities.

_____ 28. I am determined to find my Black identity.

_____ 29. I believe that White people are intellectually superior to Blacks.

_____ 30. I believe that because I am Black, I have many strengths.

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