

EXAMINING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SELECTED VARIABLES AND
THE ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF AFRICAN AMERICAN HIGH SCHOOL
STUDENTS

by

David Mark Graham

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Approved by:

Dr. Lyndon Abrams

Dr. Phyllis Post

Dr. Henry Harris

Dr. Claudia Flowers

Dr. Jane Gaultney

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Abstract

Research investigating the impact of factors such as gender, socioeconomic status, racial socialization, and academic self-concept on the academic achievement of African American high school students has been of interest to scholars for decades. Previous literature has focused much attention on the relationship of each of these constructs and academic achievement individually. The purpose of this study was to simultaneously assess the relative influence of the predictor variables of gender, socioeconomic status, racial socialization and academic self-concept on the outcome variable of academic achievement of African American high school students.

It was hypothesized that there would be statistically significant correlations between all predictor variables and the outcome variable of academic achievement as measured by grade point averages. This hypothesis was analyzed through the use of hierarchical regression. The sample for the study was 190 African American students from a rural area in a Mid-Atlantic state.

The findings revealed a significant statistical relationship between academic self-concept and academic achievement for the sample. None of the other independent variables were found to be significantly related to the outcome variable of academic achievement.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This study was designed to examine the relationship between gender, socioeconomic status, racial socialization, academic self-concept and academic achievement of African American high school students. This chapter of this study is outlined in the following manner: (a) statement of the problem, (b) purpose of the study, (c) significance of study, (d) research questions, (e) delimitations, (f) limitations, and (g) definitions.

Statement of the Problem

One of the greatest challenges facing educators and policy makers is that of the academic success of African American high school students (Osborne, 1999). Previous research on this topic has tended to show that African American students score 25% below White American high school students on standardized tests such as the Scholastic Achievement Test (SAT) and ACT (Cokley, 2002; Osborne, 1997; Van Laar, 2000). In addition Greene (2002), reported that of the White students who were enrolled in high school in 1994 as freshmen, 78% graduated by 1998 compared to only 56% of African American students.

Several important several studies (Ford, 1996; Gould 1981, 1995; Jensen, 1981; Kozol, 1991; Menchaca, 1997; Ogbu, 2003; Rouse & Austin, 2002; Rushton & Ankney, 2000) have generated four hypotheses regarding the low academic performance of African American high school students. The first hypothesis suggests (a) that African

American students are cognitively inferior or "culturally deprived," (b) the second hypothesis suggests that economically depressed environments lead to lower academic performance, (c) the third hypothesis suggests that problems in the educational environments of many African American students, such as inferior instruction, leads to lower academic performance, and (d) the fourth hypothesis suggest that the cause of this disparity is caused by persistent racism and oppression that is rooted in history.

The first argument suggests that African American students are cognitively inferior or culturally deprived. The hypothesis here is that the problem results from African Americans' genetic makeup. Some researchers have implied that African Americans, on average, have smaller brains making them less intelligent than European Americans (Cokley, 2002; Ruston, 1997). Support of this assumption abdicates others from any responsibility for minority students' lower academic performance (Hermstein & Murray, 1994; Jensen, 1981; Rushton & Ankney, 2000), as according to this view, intelligence is a static genetic trait. On the contrast, this deficit perception of African Americans is perceived by some (Gould, 1981, 1995; Menchaca, 1997) as an example of "blaming the victim" for the results of injustices perpetrated against them.

The second argument is based on the premise that environmental factors are the most important cause for lowered African American academic performance. Examples of these factors include single parent families, lower household income, lack of successful of academic role models and substandard schools (Ford, 1996; Kozol, 1991). Sojourner and Kushner (1997) and Graham (1994) reported that African Americans are over represented among economically disadvantaged populations in the United States. Economically deprived students generally have less access to educational resources such

as books, reference materials, study space, and internet or computer access. However, Rhodes (1992) noted that students who live in poor surroundings can appear to be less intelligent than they actually are. For example, middle-class, mainstream values and language used to measure academic success could possibly identify many students as underachieving when actually these students may be gifted if their true, accurate intelligences were known (Ford, 1997).

The third explanation concerning the low academic performance of African American students is based on the premise of inferior instructional environments (Education Trust, 2007; Kozol, 1991). Lee, Grigg & Donahue (2007) discovered that African American students who attended lower quality schools with fewer teacher resources tended to score lower on standardized testing than White and Asian students. Kozol (1991) asserted that many African American students, who attend public schools in large urban areas, are often confronted with the startling reality of racial segregation and inequality by society. Additionally, Baker (2005) found that African American students often attend schools that are culturally biased against them. Ford (1997) and Entwisle (1988) supported these findings with their studies on African American high school students' grade point averages. Both revealed even when African American students were compared with other groups of similar ability there were no differences between groups in achievement.

Regarding the fourth premise, which is oppression, Ogbu (1989; 2003) argued that many African American students view academics as a manifestation of oppression. Chestang (1972) stated that the covert and overt racism experienced by African Americans affects their character development. Additionally, Chestang understood

character development to be predicated upon three interdependent conditions: social injustice, societal inconsistency, and personal impotence. The hardships caused by social injustice leads to frustration over the discrepancy between American ideals and reality, as well as feelings of impotence to influence one's environment. Chestang (1972) and Miller (1999) defined this type of character development as depreciated character, where a sense of worthlessness, inadequacy, and impotence is incorporated into the imposed devaluation of self. When this occurs the individual turns away from organized societal institutions. Ogbu (1989) argues that this turning away from or against societal institutions is why many African American students identify academic achievement as “acting White.” This occurs as a result of internalized oppression. The student has internalized negative notions about self. These notions were created in a racist context (Cross 1991). Additionally, Ogbu and Fordham (1988) suggest that in order for African American adolescent students to succeed in mainstream society, they often must divorce themselves from the African American adolescent student oppositional identity and cultural frame of reference that does not value academic success. Clark (1991) argued that some African American adolescents adapt to a discriminatory environment by developing a bicultural identity. This allows them to achieve academically while maintaining a strong sense of group membership (Gordon (1995). Other authors seem to totally disagree with Fordham and Ogbu’s premise. Sanders (1997) contend that equality, not oppositional identity, continues to be the major obstacle toward education attainment. Perry (1993) asserted that, historically, African Americans have valued education.

This adjustment that the young person in this scenario goes through can be conceptualized in terms of identity development. Erikson (1967) suggested that

individuals who live in oppressed situations may internalize and adopt oppressive beliefs. Cross (1971, 1991) created a model of racial identity that developed this idea for African Americans. A process that parents utilize to help young people confront racism and oppression is racial socialization. According to Stevenson (1996, 1997) racial socialization can be defined as a process by which members of racial minority groups prepare their children for life in the larger society.

According to Nogurea (2003), there have been several variables used to examine academic achievement within African American adolescents such as income, racial identity, motivation, and career aspiration. However, Belluck (1999) found that from 1988 to 1998 there has been a divergence in the academic outcomes for African American males and females. For example, during that time period 56% of African American females completed high school compared to 43% of African American males. Increasing our understanding of these differences would enable educators to better meet the unique needs of each gender. Haynes et al.'s (1988) and more recently Rouse and Austin's (2002) study of gender and motivation found that females internalized school and learning significantly more than males. Nogurea (2003) goes on to report that African American males were more likely than African American females to receive negative treatment by faculty and staff members. Taken together, these factors support a need for further examination of gender as it relates to the success of African American students.

Another variable worthy of investigation is socioeconomic status. There is a growing body of research indicating that socioeconomic status has a significant impact on the academic achievement of students (Cho et. al. 2008; Entwisle & Alexander, 1996; Ford et al., 1998; Heiss, 1996; Stevenson 1997; Taylor & Graham, 2007). Luther,

Doernberger, & Zigler (1993) study of socioeconomic status among families reported that the mother's level of educational attainment was a significant influence in their children's reading levels and overall academic achievement.

Finally, college enrollment rates research published by the National Center Education Services (NCES, 2002) found that, in the graduating class of 1999, 82% of the college student had at least one parent who held a bachelor's degree or some form of higher education after high school. However, the percentage was much lower for students who had parents who completed high school (54%). Increasing our understanding of the potential impact that socioeconomic status has on the academic achievement of African American high school students will help us identify students who may underachieve in high school or who do not pursue a college education.

A third factor under consideration here is racial socialization. According to Stevenson (1996, 1997), Thomas (2000), and Thornton et al. (1997), racial socialization is a distinctive process by which members of racial minority groups prepare their children for life in the larger society. Socialization is achieved by promoting a healthy racial identity and a constructive awareness of racism and discrimination. Taylor, Chatters, Tuckers, and Lewis (1991) reported that African American parents play an essential role in their children's academic performance and achievement. Boykins and Toms (1985) reported that the parents' race-related communications were associated with positive outcomes for their children. For example, African American adolescents who received messages from their parents regarding racial barriers balanced with cultural pride messages had higher grade point averages and a greater sense of self-efficacy (Miller-Cribbs, Cronen, Davis, & Johnson, 2002). In addition, Thornton et al. (1997) found that

the racial socialization messages children receive regarding academic achievement are often influenced by their parent's educational attainment.

While racial socialization is one of the most studied areas of African American families (Taylor et al., 1990; Thomas, 2000; Thornton et al., 1997), the primary focus has been on families with elementary school aged children. With this limited research on adolescents and racial socialization, little is known about the influence of parents' racial messages during adolescence when youth are becoming increasingly aware of their racial status. There are differing opinions of the need for racially socializing young people. Some researchers such as Thornton et al. (1997) and Thomas (2000) have suggested that parents believe that racial socialization will only discourage their children and make young people angry and resentful. Others have indicated that these racial issues are too complex for children to understand and they will need to experience racism before they can truly understand its significance in their lives (Miller, 1999; McKay, Atkins, Hawkins, Brown & Lynn 2003; Stevenson et al., 1996). Increasing our understanding in this area would help define the impact that parent racial socialization messages have on the academic achievement of African American high school students.

Finally, the last variable considered here is academic self-concept. Academic self-concept has developed into a major indicator for the understanding of academic achievement (Marsh, 1990). Academic self-concept is a sub-construct of self-concept. Self-concept can be defined as how a person perceives him/herself in different areas of his or her life. Academic self-concept is the individual's self-evaluation of his or her academic ability as compared to others (Cokley, 2000). Many researchers (Byrne, 1996; Cokley, 2000; Cooper, 2004; Hansford & Hattie, 1982; Wylie, 1974, 1979) have

suggested a causal link between academic self-concept and academic achievement. Likewise, the literature indicates that there is strong association between academic self-concept and the academic achievement of African Americans (Cokley, 2000). Cokley (1992) found academic self-concept to be a better predictor of potential success for African Americans academic achievement when compared to other measures such as grade point average or standardized test scores.

Purpose of the Study

While there have been several studies comparing African American students' educational experience to that of White American students (Becker & Luthar, 2002; Hedges & Nowell, 1999; Jencks & Phillips, 1998; NCES, 2006; Roscigno, 1998; Taylor & Graham, 2007), there are few empirical studies of the within group differences of African American high school students.

The purpose of this research is to examine the relationship between the independent variables of gender, socioeconomic status, racial socialization, academic self-concept and the dependent variable of academic achievement, as measured by grade point average, of African American high school students.

Significance of the Study

Academic achievement among African American high school students is critical given the correlation between school achievement and positive outcomes over the lifespan (Marsh, 1990; Santrock, 2002). However, there has been limited attention given to the factors that promote educational achievement among African American high school students (Barbarin, 1993; Bowman & Howard, 1985). To date, much of the literature suggests that African American students often choose not to succeed in schools

because academics are identified as acting White or due to the belief that African American students have a deficit where academic achievement is concerned (Ford, Howard, Harris, & Tyson, 2000; Fordham, 1988; Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; 2003; Gould, 1987; Menchaca, 1997; Osborne, 1999; Steele, 1997).

Prior research (Ford, Howard, Harris, & Tyson, 2000; Fordham, 1988; Fordham & Ogbu, 1986) has often not included gender, socioeconomic status, racial socialization, and academic self-concept together as factors in the development of academic achievement of African American high school students. It is hoped that this study will broaden the understanding of the relationship of these variables with the performance of African American students. Moreover, counselors in their interactions with students on both the secondary school and college levels may use the insights gained in this area to identify academic achievement related issues that are tied to gender, socioeconomic status, racial socialization, and academic self-concept. This may give school counselors an expanded foundation from which to conceptualize and intervene regarding many academic issues experienced by African American students.

Research Question

What is the relationship between the independent variables of gender, socioeconomic status, racial socialization, academic self-concept and the dependent variable of academic achievement, as measured by grade point average, of African American high school students?

Delimitations

The results of this study may be affected by the following factors within the control of the researcher:

1. This study was limited to a sample of African American high school students in grades 10-12.
2. This study was limited to African American high school students who attend public school in Catawba County, North Carolina.
3. This study utilized a convenience sample.

Limitations

The results of this study may be affected by the following factors beyond the control of the researcher:

1. The result of this study should not be generalized to a population demographically different from African American high school students in grades 10th through 12th who reside in a rural town in the southeast part of the United States.

Assumptions

The following assumptions may be made concerning the implementation of this proposed study:

1. The high school students were cooperative, honest, and capable of following instructions.
2. The following variables are measurable: gender, socioeconomic status, racial socialization, academic self-concept.

Definitions

For the purpose of this study, the following operational definitions were used:

1. Academic self-concept: Academic self-concept is a domain of self-concept that refers to the academic self-evaluation within the individual (Marsh, 1991). In the current study it was measured by the Academic Self-Concept Scale (Reynolds, 1998).

2. Racial socialization: This refers to the process by which racial minority parents prepare their children for life in the larger society by promoting a healthy racial identity and constructive awareness of racism and discrimination toward members of other racial or ethnic groups (Sanders, 1997), in this study it is measured by the Teenager Experience of Racial Socialization Scale (Stevenson, 1996).

3. Socioeconomic status: Status is based on family income, parental education level, parental occupation, and social status in the community (such as contacts within the community, group associations, and the community's perception of the family;

4. Parent educational attainment: This variable is defined as the highest level of education of the parent who the student resides with. It is thought by some to be a proxy measure for socioeconomic status (i.e., high school, some college courses, 2-year college degree, 4-year college degree, master's degree, advanced study degree, professional degree).

5. Self-concept: Hattie (1992) suggests that self-concept is a cognitive and affective conception of self “expressed in terms of expectations, descriptions, [or] prescriptions, integrated across various dimensions that we attribute to ourselves” (p. 37).

6. Academic achievement: For the purpose of this study, achievement is defined as the students' cumulative grade point average.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between the independent variables of gender, socioeconomic status, racial socialization, academic self-concept on the dependent variable of the academic achievement of African American high school students. This study examined the relationship of self-concept and academic achievement in African American students, b) socioeconomic status and the academic achievement in African American students, c) racial socialization and the academic achievement in African American students and d) academic self-concept and academic achievement in African American students.

Gender and Academic Achievement

To date there appears to be a great deviation in the academic achievement of males and females (Belluck, 1999; Gurian & Stevens, 2005). The National Assessment Educational Progress (NAEP) (2007) report indicates that 42% of 12th grade female students who participated in the 2005 NAEP reading assessment scored at or above the 12th grade level of proficiency in reading. Only 29% of 12th grade males who participated in the reading assessment scored at or above the 12th grade level of proficiency in reading. Specific to African Americans, 19% of 8th grade African American female students who participated in the 2005 NAEP reading assessment scored

at or above the level of proficiency in reading compared to 9% for 8th grade African American males.

Gender and Academic Achievement among African American Students

In the study of 243 African American high school sophomores conducted by Saunders, Davis, Williams, and Williams (2004), African American female students, on average, had higher grade point averages than African American male students did. Additionally, the U.S. Department of Education (2001) reported that males performed 1 to 1 ½ years behind females in reading. It should be noted that males are still out performing females in math and science; however, the gap between males and females in the area of reading and writing is greater than the gap between males and females in math and science (U.S. Department of Education, 2001). In summation, African American male students extent fall behind in school compared to females or racially different peers, typically have lower grades in reading and math, and are more likely to have failed one or more grades (Alexander & Entwisle, 1988; Entwisle et al., 1997; Entwisle & Hayduk, 1982; Jordan & Cooper, 2003; Polite & Davis, 1999; U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1992).

The consequences of academic achievement among African American male and female students are apparent in the gap between the academic outcomes of African American males and females (Belluck, 1999; U.S. Department of Education, 2001). African American females graduated from high school at higher rates than high African American males (Greene's 2002). Additionally, African American female college students, on average, were graduating from college at a higher percentage than that of African American males (16% of females vs. 12% of males; Carter & Wilson, 1993;

Hawkins, 1996; U.S. Department of Education, 1998). In the end, 80% of all high school dropouts are males (NCES, 2001).

Saunders et al. (2004) found that there was a significant interaction between the African American female students' academic skills and their motivation. However, that interaction was not significant among the African American male students.

Entwisle, Alexander, and Olsen (1997) indicated that African American females' motivation is attached to societal messages regarding their academic success through economic and social rewards. However, African American males motivation to perform academically and completed high school receives few societal rewards. Although Saunders et al. (2004) study of 202 African American high school sophomores attending high school in the Midwest students found African American female students performing better academically than African American male students. Saunders et. al (2004) suggested that this may be related to the fact that most elementary school teachers are female and that female teachers might be more tolerant of and better able to handle girls' behavior in a positive manner compared to that of boys. The exact reason why African American males and females are experiencing such disparity in their educational outcomes is unclear and undoubtedly complex.

Patterns of school completion among these youth as a whole, especially as they compare to White youth, have been well-described (Alexander & Entwisle, 1988; Campbell-Whatley & Comer; 2000; Entwisle et al., 1997; Entwisle & Hayduk, 1982; Jordan & Cooper, 2003). However, the specific group differences (i.e., between African American males and females) are less well understood. A few researchers (Jordan, 1981; Roscigno, 1999; Terenzini, et al. 1996) suggest that school completion and academic

achievement is associated with self-esteem. For instance, African American females of all ages have a propensity to have more positive experiences, which may be the reason for the increased confidence in their academic skills and abilities, enhanced feelings of self-worth and reinforcement of the potential for rewards from the school system such as future employment and current social relationships (Entwisle et al., 1997; Gregory, 1997).

Rouse's (2002) study of the relationship between gender and academic performance found that African American female students who participated in the study had a higher belief in their academic ability, control of the future and the rewards of the academic achievement. On the other hand, Rouse (2002) suggested that these experiences are a contributory factor to African American males' viewing of school as a hostile environment. They feel increasingly frustrated in their academic efforts, which lead to their academic alienation and disengagement (Midgley et al., 1996). Connell et al. (1994) established a direct association between the students' emotional and behavioral engagement in school with their academic achievement. When academic disengagement occurs in elementary school, it becomes a more complex process for these young men to prepare for challenging high school curriculums, therefore, placing them at risk for added failure, such as dropping out. There is also an associated loss of confidence when academic ability and skills are valued over one's sense of self-worth (Aunola et al., 2000; Connell et al., 1994; Jordan, et al., 1996). What's more, African American males are more likely to question the importance or relevance of a high school education when they observe high levels of unemployment among African American males regardless of high school attainment (Ogbu, 1990). Stevenson et al. (1997) suggested that African American

males' perception of the world as being racially hostile toward them creates feelings of low self-confidence and ineffectiveness in societal norms such as education.

Additionally, Williams, Davis, Cribs et al. (2002) reported that boys and girls, especially in urban school settings, related differently to the street culture. They suggested urban settings have a stronger impact on African American males' academic motivation than on that of African American females. Further, Ensminger, Lamkin and Jacobson (1996) examined the relationship between academic achievement and a number of contextual factors of African American freshmen in urban setting and found boys benefited from living in middle-class neighborhoods, and may be more sensitive to the environment they live in than girls. Given these issues, it is likely that some African American males would invest less energy into their academic efforts and more energy in activities believed to be more psychologically supportive. On the other hand, African American girls are more likely to perceive positive benefits from their educational attainment and subsequently put forth greater effort (Gregory, 1997; Saunders et al. 2004).

Hill and Sprague's (1999) study on gender with race and class found that African American mothers have customarily trained their daughters to be strong, resourceful, and self-reliant in preparation for their projected roles of providing nurturance and material necessities for their families (Hill & Sprague). In addition, Scott's (1993), research on the socializing of African American girls', also found them to be assertive, independent, authoritative, individualistic, and confident along with being economically self-sufficient. Likewise, African American males received a similar message. However, Blake and Darling (1994) suggested that while African American males receive comparable messages, some of the African American parents may minimize their expectations for

their sons. This observation of African American male socialization by Blake and Darling (2004) is based on the parent's beliefs of obstacles' African American males may have to confront pertaining to their masculinity and economic and social power. These obstacles have made it difficult for African American males to adhere to the gender norms of White males in the same society.

In summary, the literature indicates (Gregory, 1997; Hill & Sprague, 1999; Polite & Davis, 1999; Campbell-Whatley & Comer, 2000; Jordan & Cooper, 2003; Blake & Darling, 2004; Saunders et al 2004) that African American female students receive more positive experiences in school than African American males. Moreover, researchers have suggested that these positive experiences have resulted in African American female students graduating from high school and attending college at a higher rate than African American male students. It appears that further examination of the relationship of gender and the academic achievement of African American students is warranted. In addition, further within subject examination may also increase our understanding of the academic self-concept of African American female students.

Socioeconomic Status

There is an emergent body of research examining the influence of family socioeconomic status on the academic achievement of adolescents (NCES, 2002). The results have suggested that children born and raised in impoverished conditions score lower on standardized achievement tests, are more likely to drop out of high school, and are less likely to attend college and postgraduate education than students from higher socioeconomic status backgrounds (Miline, Myers, Rosenthal & Ginsburg, 1986). This, according to Roscigno (1999), places African American students at a distinct

disadvantage due to the large percentage of African American families identified as lower socioeconomic status as compared to other groups. African American families are three times more likely to come from low socioeconomic status backgrounds (Zill, Collins, West & Haulsen, 1995). Additionally, Miline et al. (1986) found that African American adolescents were likely to spend more of their childhood in a one-parent household than any other group. Moreover, African American students from low socioeconomic status families are eight times less likely to graduate from college than students from higher socio-economic status families (Jenkins, 1989; Zill et. al). Roscigno (1999) reported that teachers often have lower expectation for students from low socioeconomic status backgrounds. The consequences of teachers' perceptions may result in students tracked in non-college preparatory curriculums based on their socioeconomic status.

Parent educational attainment is a strong predictor of socioeconomic status (NCES, 2002). Choy (2001) reported that parents' educational attainment was a significant factor in closing the achievement gap. Choy's national study of 1992 high school graduates found that 27% of the students who had at least one parent who attended some post secondary education, attended college. However, 73% of the students who had at least one parent who earned at least a Bachelor of Arts or Science degree attended college after graduation.

College readiness, one of the indicators colleges and universities admission offices use to predict academic success of potential college students, is often based on the numbers of years of math a student takes during his or her four years in high school. According to Choy (2001), 55% of the graduating class whose parents received a bachelor degree or higher were likely to take a fourth math compared to 34% of the

senior class whose parents had some college or post secondary education. Moreover, Ford (1999) found that students whose parents did not attend college were less likely than students who had at least one parent who earned a bachelor of arts or sciences degree to be academically prepared for college.

Ford (1999) reported that high school graduates whose parents did not go to college were more inclined to report lower educational expectations than students who had at least one parent who received a bachelor's degree. Additionally Choy (2001) found that parents who did not attend college were less likely to help their son or daughter who were applying to college.

In summary, Horn and Nunez (2000) suggest that socioeconomic status is one of the variables connected to academic performance and post-secondary enrollment. Parental education levels have been found to be reliably correlated to socioeconomic status. Therefore, further examination of African American parents' socioeconomic status as it relates to academic achievement of their children may generate insights into the impact that family income has on academic achievement of African American adolescent students.

Racial Socialization

Previous research has highlighted the family as being an essential building block for the academic development of the student (Garnezy, 1985, 1991; Rutter, 1987). Families transmit the values, norms, and beliefs that are considered necessary by older generations to cope in an environment in which race plays such a critical role (Demo & Hughes, 1990).

Socialization is generally defined as “the process by which individuals acquire knowledge, perceptions, values, attitudes, and behaviors that enable them to become competent members of groups and of society. “It encompasses childcare, training, the acquisition of language, self-concept, and the learning and enactment of social roles” (Taylor, 1991, p. 120). Racial socialization is the distinctive process racial minority parents use to prepare their children for life in the larger society, by promoting healthy racial identity and constructive awareness of racism and discrimination (Stevenson, 1996; 1997). Specific for African Americans, Peters (1985) defined racial socialization as the “tasks Black parents share with all parents—providing for and raising children ... but [they] include the responsibility of raising physically and emotionally healthy children who are Black in a society in which being Black has negative connotations” (p. 161). Thornton et al. (1990) described racial socialization in terms of personal and group identity, inter-group and inter-individual relationships, and position in the social hierarchy. Although a number of researchers differ somewhat in how they define racial socialization, they all appear to agree that racial socialization helps provide adolescents with a healthy self-image and a framework to navigate the larger society (Peters, 1985; Stevenson 1996; 1997; & Thornton 1990).

Racial Socialization and African Americans

To manage the enormous barriers African American families face due to racial and economic inequality (Sanders, 1997; Stevenson, Cameron, Herrero-Taylor, & Davis 2002), argue that African American adolescents and their parents engaged in an interactive and communicative process. In other words, the focus of socialization is on

cultural heritage and methods to navigate the racial landscape of American society (Scott, 2003).

However, it is essential to note that not all African American parents socialize their children regarding racial issues and prejudice (Bowman & Howard, 1985; Stevenson, 1994). Previous research indicates that nearly a third of Black parents do not report conveying racial socialization messages to their children (Bowman & Howard, 1985; Thomas, 2000; Thornton et al, 1990). Some argue that this usually leaves these children vulnerable to prejudice and discrimination (Spencer & Markstrom-Adams, 1990). There are a variety of reasons why African American parents do not make their children aware of racial issues or potential discrimination situations. Some parents believe that it will only discourage them and make them become angry and resentful.

When comparing African American parents to other ethnic minorities, Phinney and Chaveria (1995) found that African American parents were more likely to discuss racial barriers than were Mexican or Japanese American parents. Furthermore, African American parents provided gender-based messages to their children. For example, African American adolescent males reported that they received more messages about racial barriers and egalitarianism, while African American female students received more messages related to academic achievement and racial pride. Moreover, socialization messages to African American children frequently occur in the context of racial discrimination and oppression (McCreary et al., 1996), an environment that is not conducive to mental health (Thornton, Chatters, Taylor, & Allen, 1990).

The goals of racial socialization are to provide children with an understanding of roles, status and prescribed behaviors within society as an appreciation of their position within the social structure (Thomas, 2000; Thornton et al, 1990).

The socialization process is not presented in the same manner in all African American families. It can be direct or indirect, verbal or nonverbal, overt or covert (Stevenson, 1994; Thornton et al., 1990). It may also transpire through the observation of “modes, sequences, and styles of behavior” (Boykin & Toms, 1985, p. 42) during interaction with family members. Modeling of behaviors and exposure to culturally relevant material and activities are some of the methods that are available to parents to facilitate this process. Nonetheless, the critical message conveyed is that race will affect available options and chances of succeeding in life, and their competencies to navigate a sometimes-hostile environment must be developed. Specifically, the acquisition of a good quality education was identified by parents in Peters’ (2002) study as essential for success in mainstream society.

Previous studies of racial socialization among African American families (Thornton, 1997; Thornton, Chatters, Taylor & Allen, 1990) found that there are three paths that govern this process for African American parents. First, they may consider mainstream orientation, which is understood to be the process of not emphasizing race, but rather giving emphasis to self-confidence, personal self-esteem, competence, and hard work to defend against societal insults and racial barriers. Secondly, they may consider the minority orientation path. African American parents, who socialize their children in a minority orientation, place more emphasis on being African American in the society while also teaching them about the institutional barriers that they may encounter.

Lastly African American parents may consider socializing their children from a cultural orientation prospective. Additionally, parents who socialize their children in an African American cultural orientation desire to promote a sense of racial pride in their children (Miller, 1999; Thornton, 1997; Ward, 1999),

However, Stevenson (1997) revealed that racial socialization that includes racial issues and prejudice whether done tacitly or explicitly, are critical to African American adolescents' success in life. Moreover, African American adolescents who do not possess an internalized awareness of racism and their cultural heritage may be handicapped in their ability to cope with racism-related experiences (Stevenson, Reed, Bodison, & Bishop, 1997).

Stevenson's Model

There are several models of racial socialization such as those presented by Boykin and Ellison (1995), Thornton et al. (1990) and Stevenson (1994). All three theories provide orientations that guide the racial socialization process. Likewise, all three models included orientations that primarily message centers from a racial oppression position where race is most likely to emphasize. However, the models differ with regards to the mainstream socialization message. Boykin and Ellison (1995) along with Thornton et al. (1990) included a racial socialization orientation in their models that minimizes race and racial oppression but rather emphasizes individual self-confidence and work ethic while Stevenson's (1994) model does not include a mainstream socialization message.

For the purpose of this study, Stevenson's (1994) model will be reviewed. The influences of racial socialization and its impact of African American youth have been well documented (Bennett, 2006; Boykins & Ellison, 1995; Chavos, Smalls, Drake,

Griffin, & Cogburn, 2008; Lalonde, Jones & Stroink, 2008; Thornton et. al., 1990) Stevenson (1994) assessment of the literature found that researchers used several terms to describe the racial dynamic in America. According to Stevenson, there are seven prominent terms used to describe racial socialization. They are cultural transmission, cultural parenting, socialization environment, race related messages, ethnic socialization and parental values transmission. Furthermore, Stevenson found a consistent message in each of these terms. African American parents deliberately socializing their children to be aware, to understand and to appreciate who they are as African Americans as well as what it means to live in a race-conscious society. Taking this into consideration, Stevenson (1994) projected that these current terms used to study racial socialization could be categorized into three models: reactive, evolutionary/creative and bicultural. The reactive model is centered on the premise that racial oppression and racism is the most prevalent issue facing African Americans. Moreover, because of the racial oppression, motivation, identity and achievement of African Americans is often increased (Stevenson, 1994). The evolutionary model is proactive and views African American culture as part of the extensive traditional African culture. In addition, the evolutionary model has its own cultural integrity that is independent of racial oppression and racism. The bicultural model, according to Stevenson (1994), is a combination of the reactive and the evolutionary models. Stevenson (1994) argued that a racial socialization model should include both reactive and proactive models due to the realities of African Americans living in the United States.

Stevenson (1995) further posited that racial socialization is significantly related to the psychological adjustment of African American adolescents. Their life balancing act

consists of struggling to survive with an attitude of life is “both and” rather than “either-or”. Stevenson (1997) suggests that many young people are put in a position where they must create and experience hope and despair simultaneously. The phenomenon of the “both-and” means that both strength and weakness can be found in the present lives of beleaguered youths. The “both-and” identity struggle is creative, reactive, proactive, and protective. It is historical, contemporary, traditional, and modern. African American racial identity and socialization has frequently been examined in dualistic fashion. Racial socialization beliefs may very well tell us more about the struggles of African American youths establishing their identity from a communal perspective.

Some African Americans youths are concerned about psychological safety within the racial identity struggle due to their perceptions of the world as a hostile and confused arena. Thus, racial socialization may serve as a mediating factor to buffer negative thought processes when teenagers find themselves psychologically oppressed in racially hostile contexts. Although racism and cultural difference constitute a threat to one’s psychological health, the awareness of its reality is viewed as healthy (Stevenson, 1995). For that reason, it was expected that a greater belief in racial socialization would be positively related to anger expression (i.e., response to reality) and inversely to depressed affect (i.e., awareness of reality). Those students who have internalized awareness of racism and their unique cultural heritage are better prepared to handle life struggles in a racially-tense context (Miller & MacIntosh, 1999).

Racial Socialization and Academic Achievement

Previous research has indicated that racial socialization plays a significant role in the academic achievement of African American students (Chavous et. al.2008; Fordham

& Ogbu, 1986; Spencer, 1999). Additionally, Aronson, (2002) supports this premise that strong race related beliefs relates in higher academic values. In a study of 377 African American youths, Bowman and Howard (1985) found that academic self-efficacy was promoted among academically achieving adolescents as a result of proactive socialization by their parents. These parents conveyed to their children the importance of ethnic pride and self-development, and an awareness of racial barriers. Sanders (1997) study of African American adolescents reported that high achieving African American adolescent students reported higher levels of racial socialization. Similarly, Spencer, Noll, Stolfus and Harpalani (2001) revealed that African American high school students who had high levels of racial socialization also had high academic achievement goals. Hughes and Chen (1997) discovered that when racial socialization messages focused on racial pride, students had better cognitive and socio-emotional outcomes. In addition, they had greater academic achievement and cognitive processing skills. Conversely, Hughes and Chen (1997) found that African American students who received parental racial socialization messages that focused on racial barriers and cultural mistrust of other ethnic groups resulted in lower academic and social outcomes. In fact it seemed to undermine their academic self-concept. Taken together, these studies suggest that one important consequences of racial socialization is that it provides adolescences with a “suit of armor” that protects them from the hostilities they may encounter as minority group members (Thornton, Chatters, Taylor & Allen, 1990).

Summary

In summary, racial socialization fosters racial identity. Helms (1990) defined racial identity as “one’s perception that he or she shares a common racial heritage with a

particular group” (p. 3). Cross, Parham, and Helms (1991) have posited that one of the functions of racial identity is “to defend and protect a person from psychological insults, and, where possible, to warn of impending psychological attacks that stem from having to live in a racist society” (p. 328). Therefore, given the shared experiences that African American students may receive, in school, and the possibility of low teacher expectations of African American students further examination of the impact that racial socialization has on the academic achievement of African American students’ is warranted.

Self Concept

Human beings have always been interested in the interpretation of themselves (Hattie, 1992). James (1890), recognized as the first person to develop the theory of self-concept, argued that memory and knowing were important contributors in the conception of the self. Additionally, James suggested that there were four constituents of the self: the body, the social self, the spiritual self, the pure ego. The first constituent of the self, described as the body or material self defined as the inner most part of the material self. The second constituent, social self, was defined as the recognition individuals receive from their peers or authority figure. The third constituent of the self, the spiritual self, is defined as ones reflection of oneself. The fourth constituent of the self that James defined is the pure ego. According to James (1890), we are only aware of this constituent in an abstract, hypothetical, or conceptual way. Moreover, James believed that this constituent of the self only occurred during subsequent reflection of the self.

In addition, James proposed that there was a hierarchical scale of the four constituents of the self. The body, according to James, was at the bottom of the scale.

The social self's ranking on the scale was higher than the body or material self. The spiritual self is the superior of the four constituents. James (1890) argued that individuals would rather lose their social and body or material self in order to secure their spiritual self.

In contrast to James (1890) premise of self concept, Cooley (1902) proposed the Sociological perspective of self, that the self is merely the reflection of others interpretation. The self, according to Cooley, had three elements that were significant in its make up. The first element that Cooley describes was the imagination of our appearance to the other person. Cooley believed this stage occurred when the individual attempted to see themselves in the eyes of others. The second stage was the imagination of the individual as the evaluator of that appearance. The individual begins to evaluate the judgment of the reflection of others on themselves. The third stage is one of maturation in which one develops self-feelings of appreciation or disapproval of the self. Mead, (1934) continued Cooley's premise of the importance of social interaction. For Mead (1934), the explanation of why human beings have a self is so that individuals might regard themselves just as they would others. In addition to Mead (1934) there have been other notable influences on the theory of self-concept, such as Freud's (1900) examination of the internal mental process and Rainey's(1948) and Roger's (1951) belief that psychotherapy was a way for individuals to change the way they see themselves. In addition, Rogers (1951) suggested that congruency between one's internal self with one's projected self creates a healthy individual.

Rogers (1951) understood self-concept as a perpetual growth mechanism where the individual continues to develop and evolve from within. Similarly, Hattie (1992)

characterized self-concept as a cognitive evaluation demonstrated in terms of expectations, which is integrated through various dimensions by which we define ourselves by. However, the literature indicates that self-concept has no universal definition (Byrne, 1996; Marsh, 1993). In addition, the familiarity of the self-concept makes it vulnerable to various shading of meaning and, as a result, difficult to study (Marsh, 1993). The difficulties conceptualizing self-concept can be attributed to a lack of a universal definition; assumed synonymy of self-terms; ambiguous distinction between self-concept and self-efficacy, and between self-concept and self-esteem; and the tendency to convey informal rather systematic notions of self-concept (Byrne, 1996).

Academic Self-Concept

Academic-self concept is a dimension of general self-concept. Academic self-concept has been defined to be the individual's self-assessment of his or her academic ability as compared to others (Cokley, 2000). Academic self-concept develops during the school years by way of the student's interactions within the school, family and community (Reglin, 1993). The belief that the academic self-concept of African American students is enhanced through the encouragement of significant others supports Picou's (1977) theory that interpersonal relationships have an impact on an individual's academic achievement.

For example, if these interactions are positive the individual's academic self will grow flourish. However, if these interactions are negative, or if they are perceived to be negative, the student's academic self-concept will be low (Reglin, 1993; Terenzini et al. 1996). Reglin's (1993) study of low socioeconomic status African American families found that over 80% of all students in his study started school feeling good about school

and themselves and their ability to perform academically. However, by the end of fifth grade, that number was reduced to 20%, and by high school graduation, the percentage was reduced to 5%.

The importance of the family, school, and peers factors into the development of academic self-concept as it emerges through social interaction. A positive academic self-concept, or the belief that one can be successful academically, provides students with the ability to persevere even during times of academic challenge (Ford, 1996). Likewise, academic self-concept can give way to academic failure and disassociation with the academic process.

The literature indicates that there is a strong relationship between academic self-concept and academic achievement (Byrne, 1996; Calsyn & Kenny, 1997; Cokley, 2000; Cooper, 2004; Hansford & Hattie, 1982; Wylie, 1979). Cooper (2004) further concludes that the effects of self-concept on subsequent performance were stronger when the measure of self-concept was based on domain specific measures such as academic self-concept rather than global measures such as self-esteem. Witherspoon, Speight and Thomas (1997) indicate that there is a strong correlation between academic self-concept and grade point average. In addition, Geradi's (1990) study on whether academic self-concept is a significant predictor of academic success among minority students found that academic self-concept was the only variable that correlated with students' GPA. Additionally, academic self-concept was the best predictor for academic success. Marsh (1991) suggested that academic self-concept was a critical element for understanding educational achievement and career aspirations. Additionally, academic self-concept was found to be a better predictor of academic achievement as measured by grade point

averages for African American students than GPAs (Cokely, 2000). Reynolds (1988) investigated the correlation of SAT scores and GPAs among college students. Reynolds found that there was a low correlation between college GPA and SAT scores. However, academic self-concept was found to have a high correlation with the student's GPA.

Summary

This section attempted to document ways in which academic self-concept may affect academic achievement. A further examination of the relationship of academic self-concept, along with gender, socioeconomic status, and racial socialization, on the academic achievement of African American high school students would serve to help researchers and practitioners understand how to study and intervene with African American high school students in need of support.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Education has often been described as the vehicle that drives the premise that all people have a right to the pursuit of life, liberty and happiness (Baum & Ma, 2007). Giroux (1988) argued that in order for individuals to achieve social, political and economical liberation in the United States, education must be achieved. However, African American students have experienced less academic success than their peers. The literature review for his study has focused on African American academic achievement and has highlighted (a) gender, (b) socioeconomic status, (c) racial socialization, and (d) academic self-concept as separate yet pertinent factors (Ford, 1997, Stevenson, 1996, Cokley 2000). An examination of these factors simultaneously is warranted. The purpose of this study will be to examine the relationship between these factors and academic achievement among African American high school students in western North Carolina. This chapter includes a discussion of the research question, participants, procedures, instrumentation, research design, and data analyses.

Research Question

The overarching question guided the research of the current study is: What is the relationship between the independent variables of gender, socioeconomic status, racial socialization, academic self-concept and the dependent variable of academic

achievement, as measured by grade point average, of African American high school students?

Research Hypothesis

There will be a significant relation between gender and academic achievement of African American high school students.

There will be a significant relation between socioeconomic status (as measured by the parent's educational level) and academic achievement of African American high school students.

There will be a significant relation between the racial socialization of African American high school students and academic achievement.

There will be a significant relation between the academic self-concept of African American high students and academic achievement.

There will be a significant relation between gender, socioeconomic status, racial socialization, academic self-concept and the academic achievement of African American high school students.

Description of Participants

Participants for this study were a convenience sample of students who high school African American male and female students in grades 10 through 12 who resided in a small rural town in western North Carolina. Participation in this study was voluntary and confidential.

Research Design

Correlational methodology, in the form of hierarchical multiple regression analyses, was used to examine the relation of the variables under consideration here. This data-analytic strategy examined the influence of (a) gender (b) socio economic status (c) racial socialization and (d) academic self-concept on GPA; these variables were entered in a sequential manner to ascertain the relative importance of each in accounting for the academic achievement of African American high school students. First, gender and socioeconomic status were entered in the multiple regressions followed by racial socialization and academic self-concept. The hierarchical multiple regression models also analyzed the change in the variance accounted for by the predictor variables entered at different steps in the analysis.

Data Collection Procedures

Once the approval was granted by the University of North Carolina at Charlotte Committee for Review of Research with Human Subjects, the investigator then contacted the designated high school principals in two western North Carolina schools to begin the recruitment process of African American high school students in grades 10 through 12 to participate in the study at their school. The investigator then met with the participants in a classroom setting to provide them with the overview of the research project. In addition, information was provided on the drawing to win a portable mp-3 player. In addition, the researcher gave each potential participant a parent/guardian permission letter (Appendix A), explaining the nature of the study and that their participation in the study was voluntary, and that the information they provided would be kept confidential. In addition, they were informed that parents and students were able to obtain a summary

of the results of the investigation after the study was completed. Along with the parent permission letter, there was a student assent form (Appendix B) that was to be signed and returned to their school counselor. The researcher coordinated with the school counselors at each school to run a phone master announcement (Appendix C) as a reminder for all potential participants.

As signed parents' and students' permission forms were returned, the school counselor recorded the participants' cumulative high school grade point average (GPA) on the GPA card (Appendix D) and attached their study number onto the card in order to maintain the confidentiality of the participants. The school counselor also recorded the participants' name and study number on a separate roster to ensure that the correct survey packets were given the participants on the day of the assessment. Once all parents and students permission forms were returned to the school, the researcher then placed the participant's study number on their survey packet, assessment instruments, demographic survey and their gift prize card. Once all parental forms were collected and information recorded, data collection began.

Participants were called out of class by grade level during the designated time to take the assessments. Survey packets were distributed to the participants by study number. Each survey packet included a demographic survey (Appendix E), the Teenager Experience of Racial Socialization Scale (TERS), an assessment that measures African American adolescent's perceptions of their parents' proactive and protective socialization strategies (Appendix F), and the Reynolds Academic Self – Concept Scale (ASCS), an assessment that measures academic self-concept in adolescent students (Appendix G)

The researcher debriefed the participants upon their completion of the study. Participants who were absent were rescheduled to take the assessment the next day. The participants took on average about 20 minutes to complete the assessments.

Instrumentation

The three self-report instruments selected for this study included the Racial Socialization Scale, 40-items (Stevenson et al. 2001), the Academic Self Concept Scale, 40-items (Reynolds, 1989) and a Demographic Survey, 5 items developed by the researchers. Instrumentation descriptions are as follow.

Demographic Questionnaire: (Appendix D) A demographic questionnaire was used to gather information on the participants, race, gender, age, grade level, and their parent educational attainment. The questionnaire is located Appendix E.

The Teenager Experience of Racial Socialization Scale, (Appendix E): The Teenager Experience Racial Socialization Scale (Stevenson et al. 2001) measures the construct of racial socialization based on the theoretical premise of Stevenson et al. (2001). The primary purpose of the instrument is to provide a self-report measure of the messages African American teenagers receive from their parent/ guardian related to racial socialization. Teenager Experience of Racial Socialization (TERS) is a 40-item, 3-point Likert self-reported scale designed to assess the quality and frequency of racial socialization messages respondents have heard from parents or caregivers. Stevenson et. al (2001) proposed that parents' messages are designed to be either proactive or protective. The TERS consist of five subscales: (a) Cultural Coping with Antagonism (CCA), (b) Cultural Pride Reinforcement (CPR), (c) Cultural Appreciation of Legacy

(CEL), (d) Cultural Alertness to Discrimination (CAD) (e) Cultural Endorsement of Mainstream (CEM).

The Cultural Coping with Antagonism (CCA) subscale measures messages associated with the importance of overcoming racial hostilities and the role of spirituality and religion in coping with such difficulties. The CCA consists of 13 items. A sample statement would be “Black children should be taught early that God can protect them from racial hatred.” The Cultural Pride Reinforcement (CPR) subscale consists of nine items and measures messages of cultural pride and knowledge instilled in African American youth. A sample question would be “Going to a Black school would help Black children feel better about themselves.” The Cultural Appreciation of Legacy (CAL) subscale consists of five items and measures messages related to recognition and appreciation of African American cultural heritage. A sample question would be “You are connected to a history that goes back to African royalty.” The Cultural Alertness to Discrimination (CAD) subscale consist of six items and measures messages related to awareness of racism in society and challenges to healthy race relations between Blacks and Whites. A sample question would be “Whites have more opportunities than Black.” Finally, the Cultural Endorsement of the Mainstream (CEM) scale consist of six items and measures messages about the relative importance of involvement with the majority culture (i.e., White) institutions and the value and benefits African Americans can receive by their involvement with these institutions. The following would be a sample question “Too much talk about racism will keep you from reaching your goals in life.” A Likert-type scale is assigned to each response in order to indicate the student’s perception about the degree to which the statement applies to him or her. The wording of the statement

suggests that the higher the extent of the agreement, the greater the possession of the factor being represented. The higher scores on each of these subscales correspond to higher levels of racial socialization. The sum of the first four subscales comprises the Protective Racial Socialization Experience (PRSE) and the total score of all five subscales represent the Adaptive Racial Socialization Experience (ARSE) scale. Stevenson et al. (2002) reported internal consistency reliability coefficients alpha ranging from .71 to .85 for the five subscales and .91 for the total score. Only the total score was used in the research study.

The Reynolds Academic Self – Concept Scale (Appendix F): The Reynolds Academic Self – Concept Scale is a 40-item four-point Likert scaled (ranging from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 4 = *strongly agree*). The Academic Self – Concept Scale yields one global score and seven subscale scores. In addition, the items are keyed in a positive direction for academic self-concept. The inventory consisted of five scales: (a) General Self-Concept, (b) Academic Self-Concept, (c) Social Self-Concept, (d) Social Anxiety, and (e) Social Desirability. Sample items include the following: “Most courses are very easy for me” and “I am satisfied with the class assignments that I turn in.” The Cronbach’s alpha for the entire scale is .92. The instrument contains 17 scales, including nine core subjects (English language, English literature, foreign languages, history, geography, commerce, computer studies, science and mathematics), six noncore subjects’ scales (physical education, industrial arts, art, music, religious studies, and health), one physical subscale (Physical) and one general school subscale. The scale ranged from (*Definitely False*) to 8 (*Definitely True*).

Data Analyses

All data were entered into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software. Descriptive statistical analysis such as frequency tabulations and measures of central tendency, charts and plots were analyzed for categorical and continuous variables. In addition, data were screened for outliers, normality of distribution, means and standard deviations data analysis that included bi-variate correlational procedures and hierarchical multiple regressions.

Hierarchical multiple regression is a form of multiple regressions that involves theoretically -based decisions for how predictor variables are entered into the analysis. Predictor variables were entered in stages or in a sequential manner that corresponds to the researcher's specified predictor assumptions. Predictive variables that the researcher desires to control are entered first to partial out the variance explained by these variables. The first predictive variables, that were block entered, was demographic variables (gender and socioeconomic status). These predictor variables were entered first given the fact that students bring these two variables to the study regardless of their school and home experience. The remaining predictors, racial socialization and academic self – concept, were block entered to account for the unique contribution of the predictor, change over and above that which can be accounted for by other variables previously entered into the analysis.

Summary

In this study a computed hierarchal regression was conducted to investigate the relationship between gender, socioeconomic status, racial socialization, academic self-concept and academic achievement among African American high school students.

The current chapter described the description of the participants, instrumentation, data collection procedures, research design, and statistical analysis. Each participant received two instruments to complete the Teenage Racial Socialization Scale, the Reynolds Academic Self – Concept Scale, and a Demographic Survey (i.e., gender, socioeconomic status, grade, age, and cumulative grade point average). A multiple regression analysis was run to determine the relationship of gender, socioeconomic status, racial socialization, academic self-concept and academic achievement of African American high school students.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between the selected variables of gender, socioeconomic status, racial socialization, academic self-concept and academic achievement of African American high school students. This chapter presents the findings of the study. The first section describes the sample and the second section presents univariate results followed by a presentation of correlation comparisons of the variables. The final section presents the findings of the multiple regression analysis of the variables in response to the research question. This chapter closes with a summary of the results.

Description of Participants

After removal of invalid cases ($n = 7$), the data set included 190 high school students' who were enrolled in two western North Carolina public school systems. All of the participants in this study identified their race as African American. The sample ($N = 190$) reported ages ranging from 15 to 19 ($M = 16.47$, $SD = 1.03$). Twenty-two percent ($n = 43$) of the student participants reported their age as 15. Another 25 % ($n = 47$) of the student's sample reported their age as 16. While 36% ($n = 69$) of the students sample reported their age as 17. Slightly below 16% ($n = 30$) of the participants reported their age as 18. One student ($n = 0.5\%$) reported their age as 19. The median age of the sample was 17. A slight majority (51.1%) of the participants were female 97, while 93 (49%) were male. A little over 38% identified themselves as seniors ($n = 73$). Thirty-one percent of the sample group identified themselves as sophomores ($n = 59$) and 30% of the

sample population identified themselves as juniors ($n = 58$). Thirty-six percent ($n = 76$) of the participants reported their parent educational attainment as a high school diploma. Approximately twenty –seven percent of the sample identified their parents educational attainment as some college ($n = 52$). Twenty three percent ($n = 48$) of the sample participants identified their parent’s education attainment as four-year college degree. Twelve percent ($n = 24$) of the students indicated that their parents education attainments was less than a high school degree. The grade by sex distribution for the sample is reported in Table 1.

Table 1

Grade and Sex Distribution Within Sample

Grade	Percentage	n	Female		Male	
			Percentage	n	Percentage	n
10	31.1	59	15.0	28	16.0	31
11	30.5	58	14.0	25	17.0	33
12	38.4	73	23.0	44	15.0	29

Descriptive Statistics and Reliability of Scores

Mean scale scores, standard deviations, and estimates of internal consistency (i.e., Cronbach’s coefficient alpha) for each scale are presented in Table 2. The data provide information regarding the degree of racial socialization and academic self-concept. Cronbach’s alpha’s internal consistency estimates for the Scale of Teenage Racial Socialization (TERS) and Academic Self-Concept (ASC).

(Teenager Experience of Racial Socialization TERS), Participants reported an overall TERS scale score mean of 53.77 (SD = 8.61) ranging from 12 to 70. The TERS

results were screened for outliers and normality of distribution including skewness and kurtosis indices. There were eight univariate outliers (3.5 standard deviations below the mean) found for the TERS, which created a negatively skewed distribution. These outliers were not included in the major analysis. This reduced the sample size to 182.

The Reynolds Academic Self – Concept Scale (ASC) is a 40-item four-point Likert scale (ranging from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 4 = *strongly agree*). The ASC yields one global score and seven subscale scores and only the global score will be used in this study. The results of the ASC are presented in Table 2. An overall mean score on the ASC of 112.86 ($SD = 13.83$). Academic self-concept scores ranged from 81 to 152.

Table 2

Reliability Estimates, Means and Standard Deviations

Instrument	Coefficient α	# Of Items	Skew	M	SD
PRSE	0.88	40	-1.25	53.77	8.61
ASC	0.9	40	0.36	112.86	13.8

Correlation Analyses

The objectives of this study were to examine the relationship between gender, socioeconomic status, racial socialization, and academic self-concept as it relates to the academic achievement of African American high school students. Prior to the analysis, the data were examined for accuracy of entry, outliers, normality of distribution, skewness, and kurtosis. The data were screened for normality (all coefficients resulted in

absolute values of less than 2 with the exceptions of the demographic variables of gender and socioeconomic status). All statistical procedures were performed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

Pearson product-moment correlations were computed between the GPA averages and the predictor variables for academic achievement (total racial socialization score), academic self-concept; and the demographic variables of (gender and socioeconomic status). There was a low positive correlation between the racial socialization score and gender ($r = .145, p < .05$). This would indicate that individuals with high racial socialization scores tended to be males. There was also a low positive correlation between racial socialization and academic self-concept ($r = .170, p < .05$). This indicated that students who had high racial socialization scores also had high scores on the academic self-concept assessment. There was a large inverse relationship between high school and some college ($r = -.469, p < .01$), no high school and high school ($r = -.290, p < .01$), and no high school and some college ($r = -.233, p < .01$). This indicated as parents educational levels went up so their student's academic achievement went down.

In addition, there was a moderate inverse relationship between high school and racial socialization ($r = -.143, p < .05$). This indicated that when parent's educational background was high school their students generally scored lower on the racial socialization scale. There was no relationship between gender and academic self-concept ($r = -.107, p > .05$), gender and no high school ($r = -.087, p < .05$), gender and high school ($r = -.028, p > .05$), gender and some college ($r = -.058, p < .05$), gender and academic self-concept ($r = -.107, p > .05$), academic self-concept and no high school ($r = -.096, p > .05$), academic self-concept and high school ($r = -.071, p > .05$), academic self-concept

and some college ($r = .107, p < .05$), no high school and racial socialization ($r = .044, p > .05$), and some college and racial socialization ($r = .50, p > .05$). Table 3 presents the correlation matrix. There was a significant relationship between academic achievement and academic self-concept ($r = .002, p < .01$).

Table 3
Correlation Coefficients of all Variables Under Consideration

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. GPA	-					
2. Male	-.122	-				
3. No HS	-.085	-.097	-			
4. HS	-.030	-.011	-.290*	-		
5. SOME COLLEGE	.075	-.049	-.240*	-.459*	-	
6. PRSE	-.069	.113	-.007	-.099	.062	-
7. ASCS	.189*	.065	-.160*	-.022	.106	.194 **

* Denotes significance at the .05 level

** Denotes significance at the .01 level

Multiple Regression Analyses

Prior to the hierarchical multiple regression analyses, the independent variables gender, socioeconomic status, racial socialization and academic self-concept were examined for linearity. Results of the variance inflation factor (all less than 2.0) suggest that the estimated β s are well established in the following regression models. Due to the fact that gender and socioeconomic status were dichotomous predictor variables, a dummy code was created. For the gender variable, male was established as the reference category and female was identified as the comparison group. For socioeconomic status, which had four levels, a dummy code was created. The number of variables that were

created for socioeconomic status was three. One dummy variable that was created compared everyone that had a four-year college degree to those who did not complete high school. The second dummy coded variable compared everyone with a four-year college degree to those who had a high school degree. The last dummy coded variable compared four-year college degrees with those who had some college experiences.

The research question addressed was: What is the relationship between gender, socioeconomic status, racial socialization, academic self-concept and academic achievement of African American high school students? Gender and socioeconomic status were entered in the sequence first given the fact that these variables occur prior to their academic experience. The results of the hierarchical regression predicting the relation of the selected variables; are reported in Table 4. The results of step one indicated that the variance accounted for by gender and socioeconomic status was $R^2 = .028$ (adjusted $R^2 = .006$). This indicates that gender and socioeconomic status account for 2.8% of the variance in academic achievement. The results of step one indicated that gender and socioeconomic status was not significantly different from zero ($F_{(1,293)} = .275$, $p > .05$). Next, racial socialization scores were entered into the regression equation. The change in variance accounted for by racial socialization ($\Delta R^2 = .004$) was not a statistically significant increase in variance already accounted for in the step one model ($\Delta F_{(7,13)} = .400$, $p > .005$). In step three, the academic self-concept variable was entered into the regression equation. The change in variance accounted for (ΔR^2) was equal to .038, which was a statistically significant increase in variance accounted for above that contributed by the previous predictor variables ($\Delta F_{(7,184)} = .008$), $p < .05$). The regression coefficients, semi

partial correlation, t-values, and p-values are reported in Table 4. The only predictor variable that was statistically significant was ASCS.

Table 4

Unstandardized Regression Coefficients (B) and Intercept, the Standardized Regression

<u>IV s</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>β</u>	<u>sr_i</u>	<u>t-value</u>	<u>p-value</u>
Intercept	1.803		0.574	3.142	0.002
Male	-0.208	-0.131	0.118	-1.769	0.079
No HS	-0.189	-0.081	0.203	-0.935	0.351
HS	-0.094	-0.057	0.155	-0.609	0.544
Some College	0.014	0.008	0.163	0.087	0.931
PRSE	-0.009	-0.101	0.007	-1.34	0.182
ASCS	0.012	0.202	0.004	2.68	.008*

Summary

Hierarchical regression analysis indicated that, jointly, the four predictors (gender, socioeconomic status, racial socialization, and academic self-concept) accounted for .07% of grade point averages. Standardized regression coefficients indicated the importance of academic self-concept in the prediction of GPA ($\beta=.202$). However, gender, socioeconomic status and racial socialization did not contribute significantly to grade point averages.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

The U.S. Department of Education (2004) reported that in 2003 minority students in public schools across the United States represented 40% of the school population. Sommers, Owens and Piliawosky (2008) reported that percentage nearly doubled in large urban cities such as New York, Detroit and Los Angeles to 70 %. While there have been a few empirical studies focusing on academic achievement among African American students, there is a dearth of literature focused explicitly on gender, socioeconomic status, racial socialization, and academic self concept (Ogbu, 2003).

The primary objective of this study was to examine the relation between gender, socioeconomic status, racial socialization, and academic self-concept of African American high school students' academic achievement. The overarching question that guided this study was what is the relationship between the independent variables of gender, socioeconomic status, racial socialization, academic self-concept and the dependent variable of academic achievement, as measured by grade point average, of African American high school students? In this chapter, findings of this study are presented as they relate to previous research and literature. The chapter consists of the following sections: discussion of the results, contributions and limitations of the study, conclusions, implications of the findings, recommendations for future research, and concluding remarks.

It was hypothesized in this study that the participant's gender, and socioeconomic status, would account for a significant amount of variance in their academic achievement as expressed by grade point average. It was also postulated that racial socialization would account for a significant variance in grade point averages. Lastly, I hypothesized that academic self-concept would account for a significant amount of variance of grade point averages.

Participants of the study completed the Teenager Scale of Racial Socialization (Stevenson, 2002), the Academic Self-Concept Scale (Reynolds, 1998) and a demographic questionnaire developed by the researcher. The sample consisted of 190 African American high school students enrolled at two southeastern public high schools.

Most hypotheses not supported by the data. Only academic self-concept was found to be significantly related to GPA.

Discussion of Results

A hierarchical regression analyses revealed that that gender was not a significant predictor of academic achievement. These findings were a divergence from previous literature (Honora, 2002; Margolin & Gordis, 2000 & Skowron, 2005) which reported a gender difference in the academic achievement of African American high school students. However, it must be noted that previous studies of gender difference between African American students were conducted primarily in large urban areas which, according to Ferguson (2000), present unique stressors for African American male students that may impede their academic progress from a very early age.

Socioeconomic status was not a significant predictor of academic achievement. Although prior research studies (Lee, Griggs, & Donohue, 2007; NAEP, 2006) have indicated that low income students under-perform in both reading and mathematics at

grades 4, 8, and 12 compared to their middle and upper income peers. The divergence of these findings from previous research examining socioeconomic status and academic achievement may be the result of students' social desirability.

Racial socialization was also not significant in predicting academic achievement. This is a divergence from previous findings (Caughy, O'Campo, Randolph & Nickerson, 2002; Hugh & Chen, 1999), which reported a relationship between racial socialization and academic achievement. The departure of these findings from previous studies may possibly be attributed to the sample populations' urban setting where race may play a more salient role in the life of African American students.

Lastly, the prediction that academic self-concept would be a significant predictor of academic achievement was confirmed. The findings are comparable to the results previous literature studies related to academic self-concept and academic achievement (Cokley 2002; Demo and Parker, 1987; Gray – Little & Hafdahl, 2000; Osborne, 1995; Witherspoon, Speight and Thomas, 1997). In summary, the hypothesis that gender, socioeconomic status and racial socialization would predict academic achievement was not confirmed. However, the prediction of a relationship between academic self-concept and academic achievement was confirmed.

Contributions and Limitations of the Study

This study expanded the current literature by providing empirical research on factors related to academic performance of African American high school students. Secondly, the study expanded the literature base by providing information suggesting that academic self-concept may lead to higher grade point averages of African American high school students. Third, the study expanded the literature base by examining the relationship between of gender and academic achievement.

Several limitations of this study warrant discussion. First the sample was one of

convenience. Generalizing the results is cautioned against because the African American students were selected from two high schools with small African American student populations in a rural area in the southeastern region of the United States.

Secondly, limitations include those common to all self-report measures and the accuracy of participants' perception of the items measured. Potential problems inherent in this type of measure include the following: a) bias due to participant's desire to answer items in a socially desirable manner, b) a reflection of anticipated behavior versus actual attitudes and behaviors, and c) interpretation of the items on the measures differently than was originally intended by the authors. Lastly, while there was a significant relationship between academic self-concept and academic achievement, the correlation was small, possibly due to the size of study's sample.

In summary, future researchers should replicate this study in other geographical areas and with a larger sample group to confirm or refute the findings. Considering these limitations, the findings of this study present important issues for counselor education and future research.

Implications of the Findings

Despite the limitations, the findings demonstrate the relationship between academic self-concept and academic achievement of African American high school students. For the population observed, the findings of this study provide the literature base with additional literature of each selected variable's importance. Therefore in light of the results educators, counselors and parents should be cognizant of the importance of development of academic self-concept among African American high school students. Additionally, school counselors and teachers should incorporate programs and skills that foster growth and development of academic self-concept.

Recommendation for Future Research

The study identified a lack of contributions between the variables of gender, socioeconomic status, racial socialization, and academic self-concept toward predicting the academic achievement of African American high school students. While the findings reported here contribute to the body of research of understanding what variables impact academic achievement as measured by grade point average, many questions remain unanswered regarding the role of gender, socioeconomic status, and racial socialization.

Further examination of the development of academic self-concept is warranted, specifically among African American high school students. Secondly, additional research is recommended to further examine the potential of the remaining variables found to be unrelated in this study.

While acknowledging the limitations in the findings there are still practical implications for educators, researchers and anyone concern with the academic development of African American high school students. Early detection of students with low academic self-concept may help educators identify which students are at-risk for educational underachievement. In addition, educational policy and practice that supports student development of academic self-concept in the school context may help more African American high school students increase their academic performance.

Lastly, future research should be conducted to examine the academic and motivational beliefs of African American high school students in an urban setting to those of students living in rural settings.

Concluding Remarks

In recent years, counseling educators have spent more time examining the academic achievement of African American students. The results of this study suggest that when examining the selected variables of gender, socioeconomic status, racial

socialization, and academic self-concept and its relationship with the academic achievement of African American high school students, that only academic self-concept had a significant relationship with academic achievement

Based on the results of this study and earlier findings reported in the literature, it is recommended that school counselors familiarize themselves with the following: a). School counselors should have knowledge of the relation that exists between African American high school student's academic self-concept and their academic achievement. b). School counselor should have a sound understanding of racial and ethnic identity development, as well as working knowledge of what stereotype threat is and how it may displayed in the academic setting. c). School counselor should help advocate, promote and provide professional development to faculty and staff regarding strategies that enhance the academic achievement of African American high school students. d). School counselors should help African American high school students develop and nurture their interpersonal skills as a way to develop positive relationships with school personnel.

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APPENDIX A

**College of Education**

Department of Counseling Education
9201 University City Blvd, Charlotte, NC 28223-0001
t/ 704.687.8964 f/ 704.687.3749

Dear Parent/Guardian,

My name is David Mark Graham and I am a doctoral student at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. I am interested in studying social and academic attitudes of African American students in grades 10th through 12th as they relate to academic achievement. If you agree to allow your son/daughter to participate in this study they will be eligible to win a MP3 player. Additionally, they will be one of 200 African American High School students to take part in the study. The study will take approximately 30 minutes of their time to measure students' academic and social beliefs regarding academic achievement. In addition, we will need to obtain your son/daughter's grade point average from the school counseling office. Participation in this study is voluntary, and refusal to participate in this project will not involve any penalty nor do any impact to their academic standing. Also, your son/daughter is free to choose not to answer any questions or withdraw from participation at any time without penalty. If you decide to give permission for your son/daughter to participate in this study you and your son/daughter will need to sign and return the parental consent and student assent form to the school counselor office prior to participation in his study.

Thank you very much for your support.

Sincerely,

David Graham

APPENDIX B

**College of Education**

Department of Counseling Education
9201 University City Blvd, Charlotte, NC 28223-0001
t/ 704.687.8964 f/ 704.687.3749

**Informed Consent for
Examining Student Attitudes toward Academic Achievement**

The goal of this study is to develop a clearer understanding of what positively or negatively influences the academic achievement of African American high school students. Some educators acknowledge that the underachievement of African-American students in public schools is persistent, pervasive, and disproportionate; and that there are two few studies that focus on the successful academic achievement.

My name is David Mark Graham and I am a doctoral student at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. The chair of my dissertation committee is Dr. Lyndon Abrams, Associate Professor in the School of Education Counseling department

The purpose of my doctoral dissertation is to identify variables that may possibly have a positive or negative relationship on the academic performance of African-American high school students. Therefore, only students who have identified themselves as African American or Black and who are in grades 10th through 12th are eligible to participate.

If you agree to allow your son or daughter to participate in this research study, they will be one of 200 African American High School who will complete three surveys (demographic survey, teenage racial socialization survey and academic self-concept survey). This study will take approximately 30 minutes of their time to measure students' academic and social beliefs. A few examples of survey questions are: "Most courses are very easy for me" "If you work hard then you can overcome barriers in life" and "Be proud of who you are" In addition, we will need to obtain students grade point averages from the school counseling office.

Participation in this study is voluntary, and refusal to participate in this project will not involve any penalty nor have any impact to student academic standing. Also, your child is free to choose not to answer any questions or withdraw from participation at any time without penalty. If you agree to allow your son/daughter to participate in the study they will be given a date, time and a classroom location to meet afterschool to complete the surveys.

Any information about your child's participation, including your child's identity, is completely confidential. The following steps will be taken to ensure this confidentiality: Confidentiality will be maintained using a number code system that will be assigned by the school counselor to each

student once parent consent and student assent forms are returned. Moreover, we will never know the student's true identity since all information provided to us will be identified only by code number. And we will not know what code number is assigned to which student. Lastly, the surveys will not include student names and will be sealed in envelopes. Accordingly, confidentiality will be protected continually for the duration of this study.

UNC Charlotte wants to make sure that your child is treated in a fair and respectful manner. Contact the university's Research Compliance Office (704-687-3309) if you have questions about how your child is treated as a study participant. If you have any questions about the actual project or study, please contact Dr. Lyndon Abrams (704-687-8964, lpabrams@uncc.edu)

This form was approved for use on *September, 30th, 2008* for use for one year.

I have read the information in this consent form. I have had the chance to ask questions about this study and about my child's participation in the study. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

I am at least 18 years of age, and I agree to allow my child to participate in this research project. I understand that I will receive a copy of this form after it has been signed by me and the principal investigator of this research study.

Child's Name (PLEASE PRINT)

DATE

Parent's Name (PLEASE PRINT)

DATE

Parent's Signature

DATE

Investigator Signature

DATE



UNC CHARLOTTE

College of Education

Department of Counseling Education

9201 University City Blvd, Charlotte, NC 28223-0001

t/ 704.687.8964 f/ 704.687.3749

**Informed Consent for
Examining Student Attitudes toward Academic Achievement**

My name is David Graham and I am a student at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. I am doing a study to examine students' attitudes toward academic achievement.

Participation in this study is voluntary, and refusal to participate in this project will not involve any penalty or have any impact to your academic standing. Also, you are free to choose not to answer any questions or withdraw from participation at any time without penalty. Any information about your participation, including you/your name is completely confidential. The following steps will be taken to ensure this confidentiality: Confidentiality will be maintained using a number code system that will be assigned by the school counselor to each student once parent consent and student assent forms are returned.

If you want to be in this study, please sign your name.

Signature of Participant

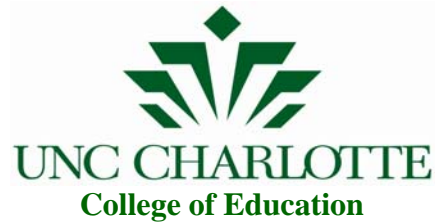
Date

Signature of Investigator

Date

Emancipated Minor (as defined by NC General Statute 7B-101, 14) is a person who is not yet reached their 18th birthday and meets at least one of the following criteria: 1) has legally terminated custodial rights of his/her parents and has been declared 'emancipated' by a court; 2) is married, or 3) is serving in the armed forces of the United States.

APPENDIX C



Department of Counseling Education
9201 University City Blvd, Charlotte, NC 28223-0001
t/ 704.687.8964 f/ 704.687.3749

RESEARCH STUDY: EXAMINING STUDENT ATTITUDES TOWARD
ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT David Mark Graham a doctoral student at
the University of North Carolina at Charlotte is interested in studying
African American students in grades 10th through 12th. Students who
participate in this study will be eligible to win a MP3 player. If you are
interested in participating in this study see your school counselor for more
information.

Appendix D

STUDY # _____

Demographic Data Questionnaire

1. Age: _____
2. Classification: Sophomore _____ Junior _____ Senior _____
3. Gender: Male _____ Female _____
4. Ethnic Background: _____
5. Education Level of most educated parent. Place an X on the line beside the level of education of your most educated parent achieved.
 - Less than High School Completion _____
 - High School Completion _____
 - Two Year College or Associate Degree _____
 - College Less than Four Years _____
 - Four Year College Degree _____
 - Master's Degree _____
 - Doctoral or Professional Degree
M.D, Ph.D., J.D., Ed.D. _____

Appendix E

TEENAGER EXPERIENCE OF RACIAL SOCIALIZATION SCALE (TERS)

Howard C. Stevenson, Ph. D University of Pennsylvania

Do your parents or any of your caregivers say to you any of the following statements now or when you were younger? Please complete this questionnaire and DO NOT include your name. Circle the number on the line depending on how often you remember hearing any of these messages: 1- Never. 2 - A Few Times. 3 -Lots of Times. Circle only one number per question. Thank you.

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|
| 1. American society is fair toward Black people. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 2. Black children will feel better about themselves if they go to a school with Mostly White children. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 3. Families who go to a church or mosque will be close and stay close and stay together. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 4. Black slavery is important never to forget. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 5. Relatives can help Black parents raise their children. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 6. Religion is an important part of a person's life. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 7. Racism and discrimination are the hardest things a Black child has to face. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 8. Having large families can help many Black families survive life's struggles. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 9. You should be proud to be Black. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 10. All races are equal. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 11. If you work hard then you can overcome barriers in life. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 12. A belief in God can help a person deal with tough life struggles. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 13. Black children will learn more if they go to a mostly white school. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 14. Knowing your African Heritage is important for your survival. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 15. Racism is real, and you have to understand it or it will hurt you. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 16. You are connected to a history that goes back to African royalty. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 17. Too much talk about racism will keep you from reaching your goals in life. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 18. Schools should be required to teach all children about Black History. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 19. Depending on religion and God will help you live a good life. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 20. Families who talk openly about religion and God will help each other to grow. | 1 | 2 | 3 |

- 2 -

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 21. Teachers can help Black children grow by showing signs of Black culture in the classroom. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 22. Only people who are blood-related to you should be called your "Family." | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 23. Getting a good education is still the best way for you to get ahead. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 24. "Don't forget who your people are because you may need them someday." | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 25. Spiritual battles that people fight are more important than the physical battles. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 26. You should know about Black history so that you will be a better person. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 27. "Train up a child in the way he should go, and he will not turn away from it" | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 28. You have to work twice as hard as whites in order to get ahead in this world. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 29. Whites make it hard for people to get ahead in this world. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 30. Be proud of who you are. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 31. Going to a Black school will help Black children feel better about themselves. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 32. You need to learn how to live in a White world and a Black world. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 33. Never be ashamed of your color. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 34. Whites have more opportunities than Blacks. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 35. A Black child or teenager will be harassed just because s/he is Black. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 36. More job opportunities will be opened to African Americans if people were not racist. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 37. Black children should be taught early that God can protect them from racial hatred. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 38. Blacks don'(always have the same opportunities as Whites. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 39. Black children don't have to know about Africa in order to survive life in America. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 40. Racism is not as bad today as it use to be before the 1960's. | 1 | 2 | 3 |

APPENDIX F

ASCS/Reynolds
Name/ID#

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. Use the following scale to rate each statement: SD. Strongly Disagree D. Disagree A. Agree SA. Strongly Agree: INDICATE YOUR RESPONSE BY CIRCLING THE APPROPRIATE LETTER(S). Be sure to answer all items. Please response to each item independently; do not be influenced by your previous choices.

- | | | | | |
|---|----|---|----|----|
| 1. Being a student is a very rewarding experience. | | | | |
| 2. If I try hard enough, I will be able to get good grades. | SD | D | A | SA |
| SD | D | A | SA | |
| 3. Most of the time my efforts in school are rewarded. | SD | D | A | |
| | SA | | | |
| 4. No matter how hard I try I do not do well in school. | SD | D | A | |
| | SA | | | |
| 5. I often expect to do poorly on exams. | SD | D | A | |
| | SA | | | |
| 6. All in all, I feel I am a capable student. | SD | D | A | |
| | SA | | | |
| 7. I do well in my courses given the amount of time I dedicate to studying. | SD | D | A | |
| | SA | | | |
| 8. My parents are not satisfied with my grades in high school. | SD | D | A | |
| | SA | | | |
| 9. Others view me as intelligent. | SD | D | A | |
| | SA | | | |
| 10. Most courses are very easy for me. | SD | D | A | |
| | SA | | | |
| 11. I sometimes feel like dropping out of school. | SD | D | A | |
| | SA | | | |
| 12. Most of my classmates do better in school than I do. | SD | D | A | |
| | SA | | | |
| 13. Most of my teachers think that I am a good student. | SD | D | A | |
| | SA | | | |
| 14. At times I feel school is too difficult for me. | SD | D | A | |
| | SA | | | |
| 15. All in all, I am proud of my grades in school. | SD | D | A | |
| | SA | | | |
| 16. Most of the time while taking a test I feel confident. | SD | D | A | |
| | SA | | | |
| 17. I feel capable of helping others with their class work. | SD | D | SA | |
| | | | | |
| 18. I feel teachers' standards are too high for me. | SD | D | A | |
| | SA | | | |
| 19. It is hard for me to keep up with my class work. | SD | D | A | |
| | SA | | | |
| 20. I am satisfied with the class assignments that I turn in. | SD | D | A | |
| | SA | | | |

-2-

21. At times I feel like a failure.	SD	D	A
	SA		
22. I feel I do not study enough before a test.	SD	D	A
	SA		
23. Most exams are easy for me.	SD	D	A
	SA		
24. I have doubts that I will do well in my major.	SD	D	A
	SA		
25. For me, studying hard pays off.	SD	D	A
	SA		
26. I have a hard time getting through school.	SD	D	A
	SA		
27. I am good at scheduling my study time.	SD	D	A
	SA		
28. I have a fairly clear sense of my academic goals.	SD	D	A
	SA		
29. I'd like to be a much better student than I am now.	SD	D	A
	SA		
30. I often get discouraged about school.	SD	D	A
	SA		
31. I enjoy doing my homework.	SD	D	A
	SA		
32. I consider myself a very good student.	SD	D	A
	SA		
33. I usually get the grades I deserve in my courses.	SD	D	A
	SA		
34. I do not study as much as I should.	SD	D	A
	SA		
35. I usually feel on top of my work by finals week.	SD	D	A
	SA		
36. Others consider me a good student.	SD	D	A
	SA		
37. I feel that I am better than the average student.	SD	D	A
	SA		
38. In most of the courses, I feel that my classmates are better prepared than I am.	SD	D	A
	SA		
39. I feel that I do not have the necessary abilities for certain courses in my major.	SD	D	A
	SA		
40. I have poor study habits.	SD	D	A
	SA		

