2014

PREDICTORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS AMONG AFRICAN AMERICAN COLLEGE STUDENTS

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PREDICTORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS AMONG AFRICAN AMERICAN COLLEGE STUDENTS

ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy in the College of Education at the University of Kentucky

By
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2014
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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

PREDICTORS OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS AMONG AFRICAN AMERICAN COLLEGE STUDENTS

African American students are graduating from high school and enrolling in higher educational institutions at greater rates than in previous years (U.S. Department of Education, 2009). Yet, they have not achieved the same level of academic success as their racial counterparts (American Council on Education, 2010; Ross, 2012). Ultimately, this disparity has resulted in only 17.7% of the African American population 25 years of age and older having at least a Bachelor’s degree (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2012). Many researchers have employed comparative study designs to explore this disparity. Additionally, researchers commonly study academic success through the exploration of intrapsychic or environmental contributing factors. As a result, limited studies examining the confluence of these factors exist in the literature, and the impact of these contributing factors is not clearly understood.

This study seeks to explore the predictive factors of academic success among African American students by attending to both intrapsychic and environmental factors without the comparison of African American students to students from other races/ethnicities. Employing Tinto’s longitudinal model of institutional departure (Tinto, 1993) and positive psychological approaches, this study will use multiple foci and strengths to answer the research question: Do racial identity, goal commitment, and institutional climate predict academic success among African American college students? Academic success was measured in this study by academic adjustment, social adjustment, and self-reported grade point average (GPA).

Data consisted of 240 African American freshmen from colleges and universities across the nation. Participants completed an online survey that assessed their perceptions regarding racial identity, institutional climate, goal commitment, academic adjustment, social adjustment, and GPA. The results showed that racial identity and institutional climate predicted academic adjustment and social adjustment, but not GPA. Goal commitment predicted academic adjustment, social adjustment, and GPA. When all predictors were combined in the same regression analysis, academic adjustment, social adjustment, and GPA were each predicted and unique significant contributors to the explained variance in those analyses emerged. These findings may help address some of
the gaps in the literature regarding academic success among African American students. These results can aid in the understanding of the impact of racial identity, institutional climate, and goal commitment among African American college students. Additionally, these results may lead to the creation of environmental conditions that can facilitate a connection and commitment to higher educational institutions and thus, adaptive academic and psychological outcomes.

KEYWORDS: Academic success, African American college students, Racial identity, Climate, Goal commitment

La Toya Bianca Smith
March 14, 2014
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Date
This dissertation is dedicated to my great grandmother, LeeJoe Smith, and grandfather, Zema Smith, Sr. Without the opportunity to be formally educated, they modeled the importance of reading, education, and community service. Their struggles and sacrifices paved the pathway for me to have the many opportunities I have been blessed with today.
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Chapter One: Introduction and Literature Review

Overview and Statement of the Problem

Across varying educational levels, African American students have not achieved the same level of success as their racial counterparts (American Council on Education, 2010; Ross et al., 2012). For example, 58% of all Bachelor’s degree seeking first-time, full-time students who enrolled in a four-year institution in 2004 completed their degrees at the same institution within six years (Ross et al., 2012). When assessing for race, only 39% of African American students earned their Bachelor’s degree within six years of initial enrollment, whereas 69% of Asian/Pacific Islander students, 62% of White students, 50% of Latino students, and 39% of American Indian/Alaska Native students completed their degrees within that timeframe (Ross et al., 2012). Researchers have attempted to evaluate performance disparities between African American students and their racial counterparts as they relate to graduation rates, standardized test scores, grade point average (GPA), dropout rates, and other academically related variables (i.e., academic adjustment, social adjustment) (Allen, 1985; Goldsmith, 2004; Haycock, Jerald, & Huang, 2001; Hoffman, Llagas, & Snyder, 2003; Owens, Lacey, Rawls, & Holbert-Quince, 2010; Rovai, Gallien, & Whiting, 2005; Yearwood & Jones, 2012). Specifically attending to the disparity between African American and White students, the existing literature on academic achievement among African American students attests that not only does an academic disparity exist, but that this disparity also increases with more years of formal education (American Council on Education—ACE, 2010; Davis & Jordan, 1994; Epps, 1995; Ford, 1996; Ladson-Billings, 2006; Lee, 2002). For example, the American Council on Education (ACE) reported that African American and White
students begin elementary school with test scores within a comparable range. However, the longer students are in school, the wider the gap in academic achievement becomes (ACE, 2010). Specifically, by the time that African American students reach the age of 17, their reading level is consistent with that of their 13-year-old White counterparts (U.S. Department of Education, 2012).

Although this academic performance disparity exists between African American and White students, high school graduation, college enrollment, and college graduation rates have increased among African Americans during the last seventy years (U.S. Department of Education, 2009). From 1940 to 2011, the U.S Department of Education (Snyder & Dillow, 2012) reported an increase in African American high school graduation rates, from 7.7 to 84.8%. During the same time, there was also an increase among African Americans enrolled in four-year college degree programs directly after graduating high school (from four percent to approximately 39% of African Americans between the ages of 18 to 24). Ross et al. (2012) reported that in the 2008-2009 academic year, the average freshman graduate rate (AFGR)—the estimate of the proportion of public high school freshman who graduate with their high school diplomas four years after beginning their 9th grade year—was 63.2% for African American high school students. Among African Americans between the ages of 18 and 24, Ross and colleagues reported 12% were still enrolled in high school, 12% were not currently enrolled in college and had not completed high school, and 37% were enrolled in college or graduate school in 2010. Averages, regardless of race, were reported as nine percent, 10%, and 43% respectively.
Despite the encouraging trend of African American college enrollment, some research also shows that African American students transition to college and graduate from college at disproportionately lower rates than their White counterparts (ACE, 2010; Bailey, Jenkins, & Leinbach, 2005; Jaret & Reitzes, 2009; Price, 2004; Ross et al., 2012). As of 2009, this disparity ultimately resulted in only 17.7% of the African American population 25 years of age and older having at least a Bachelor’s degree (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2012). Thus, this continuing academic disparity phenomenon warrants sustained attention in the education literature.

Many researchers have taken on the task of investigating the factors that contribute to the achievement gap between African American and White college students (Ainsworth-Darnell & Downey, 1998; Carter, 2008a, 2008b; Tinto, 1993). Intrapsychic (individual) and environmental factors have been known to contribute to the achievement gap between African American and White college students. Environmental factors such as diversity and critical mass (i.e., representation of people of color) among students and faculty, lack of adjustment and incongruence (e.g., cultural discontinuity) between the individual and the institution, financial strain, and external commitments such as work and family obligations have been studied by many researchers (Ancis, Sedlacek, & Mohr, 2000; Bennett, 2002; Chavous, 2005; Cokley, 2002; Davis, 1994; Edman & Brazil, 2009; Hausmann, Schofield, & Woods, 2007; Helm, Sedlacek, & Prieto, 1998; Lundberg, 2010; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991; Tyler et al., 2008). College pre-entry factors such as lower enrollment into advanced placement and college preparatory courses, parental education levels, and higher concentrations in poorly funded schools have been examined to aid in the understanding of this achievement gap between African American and White students.
Individual factors such as cultural values, goal commitment, and racial identity have also been commonly explored in the literature and identified as contributors to the existence of the achievement gap (Awad, 2007; Baber, 2012; Carson, 2009; Cross, 1991; Erez & Zidon, 1984; Fordham, 1988; Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; Helms, 1990; Hollenbeck, Williams, & Klein, 1989; Sellers, Chavous, & Cooke, 1998; Sellers, Smith, Shelton, Rowley, & Chavous, 1998).

For example, when examining the impact of environmental factors on academic success among college students of color, Lundburg (2010) found that an institution’s emphasis on valuing diversity and students’ involvement in the college experience predicted student learning (i.e., general education, science and technology, and intellectual skills) in a sample of 3,332 college students (643 African American students, 643 Asian/Pacific Islander students, 643 Mexican American students, 149 Puerto Rican students, 494 Other Hispanic students and 117 Multi-ethnic students). Lundburg found that student involvement variables (such as relationships with faculty and administrative personnel) explained the most variance in student learning (23% of explained variance in intellectual skills, 24% of explained variance in general education, and 29% of the explained variance in science and technology). As student involvement increased, student learning increased (Lundburg, 2010). Specifically, general learning and the development of intellectual skills was found to increase when students viewed institutional contacts as approachable instead of rigid and impersonal. Regarding institutional diversity, Lundburg found that 5% of the variance in intellectual skill was
explained by the institution’s emphasis on understanding and appreciating diversity, 8% of the variance in general education was explained by this variable, and 2% of the variance in science and technology was explained by this variable. Lundburg’s results emphasized the importance of student experiences and perceptions, as students’ perceptions about the quality of interactions were shown to be more important than the frequency of interactions with faculty.

Conducting a literature review to assess the impact of college pre-entry factors on academic success among African American college students, Rovai, Gallien, and Wighting (2005) concluded that high academic intensity programs like advanced placement classes reliably predict college success. Supporting Rovi and colleagues’ (2005) work, Kuh, Kinzie, Buckley, Bridges and Hayek (2006) found that college student success—defined as academic achievement, engagement in educationally purposeful activities, satisfaction, acquisition of desired knowledge, skills and competencies, persistence, attainment of educational objectives, and post-college performance—was influenced by the following factors: 1) quality high school academic preparation, measured by enrollment, persistence, grades and educational attainment, 2) familial education background, and 3) socioeconomic status.

Cokley and Chapman (2008) set out to examine the impact that ethnic identity and racial identity (i.e., anti-White attitudes of the Cross Racial Identity Scale—CRIS, Vandiver, Cross, Worrell, & Fhagen-Smith, 2002) have on academic achievement. In a sample of 274 African American participants attending a historically Black university, Cokley and Chapman found that racial identity (i.e., anti-White attitudes on the immersion/emersion subscale of the CRIS) negatively predicted college GPA, as African
American students who identified with anti-White attitudes reported lower college grades.

**Study Rationale**

Although researchers are exploring environmental and intrapsychic factors that contribute to academic success among African American students, and African American students are graduating from high school and entering college at higher rates than in previous years, attrition rates have remained stable at roughly 50% (ACE, 2010; Bailey et al., 2005; Braxton, Hirschy, & McClendon, 2004; Price, 2004; U.S. Department of Education, 2009; van Larr, 2000). Therefore, additional research is needed to identify factors that may increase African American college students’ completion, which is one common indicator of academic success. The study of academic success among African American students is important, as understanding the factors that contribute to academic success, by attending to the unique variables and strengths within the African American student population, can help both researchers and educators narrow the current gap in academic achievement between African American students and their White counterparts. Presently, intrapsychic and environmental factors have been researched throughout the literature. Yet, the present research tends to focus largely on intrapsychic *or* environmental factors, while often ignoring the confluence of these types of factors in the study of the existing achievement disparity between African American and White college students.

Additionally, the current literature presents opposing conclusions about the impact of intrapsychic or environmental factors on academic success among African American college students, as researchers have found racial identity (Rowley, Sellers,
Chavous, & Smith, 1998; Sellers, Rowley, Chavous, Shelton, & Smith, 1997; Sellers, Smith, et al., 1998; Vandiver, Fhagen-Smith, Cokley, Cross, & Worrell, 2001), involvement in Black college student organizations (Allen, 1992; Guiffrida, 2003; Guiffrida & Douthit, 2010; Oliver, Smith, & Wilson, 1989), and parental attachment and relationships with friends from home (Guiffrida & Douthit, 2010; VanWinkle, Love, Tyler, Thomas, & Smith, 2011) to contribute to and have a negative impact on academic outcome measures like GPA, persistence, completion and graduation, and academic and social adjustment. Research that examines the influence of both types of factors on multiple academic success outcomes such as GPA, academic adjustment, and social adjustment is critical to advancing the literature. Specifically, investigation of the confluence of both intrapsychic and environmental factors provides a more realistic reflection of college students’ experiences as these explorations will look at both factors within students and factors within the campus/college environment in which students exist.

Jencks and Phillips (1998) posit that a long-term benefit of scholarship in this area is the promotion of racial equality, as individuals with college degrees are more likely to be involved in civic activities and organizations, encourage their children to attend college, and make more money than individuals without college degrees (Hamilton, 2009; Redd, 2000; Rovai, Gallien, & Wighting, 2005). Redd (2000) argued that understanding and addressing the academic achievement gap can result in more college graduates which, in turn, will lead to increased income earnings and thus, societal contributions among people of color. Cokley and Chapman (2008) further supported
these assertions by writing that “education is perhaps the most important enterprise to the
strength and perpetuity of a group of people” (p. 349).

The current study seeks to answer the following research question: Do racial
identity, goal commitment, and institutional climate predict academic success among
African American college students? This study will use multiple foci and strengths not
prevalent among other studies to answer the aforementioned research question and to
help clarify and advance the literature. A significant strength of this study is that it will
attend to the combination of intrapsychic and environmental factors that may contribute
to academic success, operationalized as academic adjustment, social adjustment, and
GPA, among African American college students. Unlike common operationalizations of
academic success (e.g., standardized assessments and course grades), this
operationalization of academic success comprises cognitive and behavioral aspects that
may provide a necessary foundation for the development of institutional interventions
that can support adjustment and ultimately, academic success. In addition to exploring
both individual and environmental factors, this study is governed by positive
psychological approaches in the examination of the factors that contribute to academic
success. Positive psychological approaches intend to change the existing focus of
research from an emphasis on deficits and pathologies (e.g., drop out, African American
student population deviation from the norm/White student performance) to an exploration
and understanding of strengths, protective factors, and positive outcomes (e.g., academic
success) (Gable & Haidt, 2005). Positive psychology has been misperceived by scholars
not involved in the “positive psychology movement” as a repositioning in focus to
exploring “positive” terms (Gable & Haidt, 2005). Conversely, positive psychology and
psychological approaches are strengths in research as employing them can “show what actions lead to well-being, to positive individuals, and to thriving communities” and can promote the development of institutions that understand and encourage better citizenship, individual resilience and self-knowledge, and socially just communities (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000, p. 5). Last, this study will explore the contributing factors of academic success from a within-group analysis by examining individual and environmental factors among African American students rather than making comparisons to White students as a normative group. Using this positive psychological approach should contribute to researchers and educators’ ability to understand African American college students’ academic success and develop interventions from a positive, strengths-based, supportive framework. Thus, this approach may help to address some of the gaps in the existing scholarship concerning academic success among African American students.

**Theoretical Framework**

**Overview.** Though the existing research has aided in understanding why particular students are successful and others are not, its lack of practical application leaves institutions and researchers without the information and guidance needed to adequately address the disparity that exists in academic success. Challenging this lack of practical application, Tinto (1993) developed a longitudinal model of student attrition. First, Tinto reframed the term “dropout” as the discussion of “departure,” and identified the different types of departure associated with institutions of higher education throughout his model development. Next, his longitudinal model of student attrition includes dimensions that relate to the dispositions of individuals who enter higher
education, the character of student’s interactional experiences within the institution following entry, and the external forces that sometimes influence a student’s behavior within the institution. Last, among the many factors studied that contribute, either positively or negatively, to academic success, Tinto’s longitudinal model of student attrition presents variables that represent a more realistic reflection of the college student experience. To this end, studying these factors may enhance an understanding of college student academic success, particularly among African American students.

Tinto’s model of student attrition addresses some of the existing shortcomings in the literature to further an understanding of academic success in college students. For example, Tinto employs a positive psychological approach to clarify the inaccurate portrayal of student “dropouts” as being distinctively deviant or “lacking a particularly important attribute needed for college completion” (Tinto, 1993, p. 3) when compared to students who persist. This positive psychological approach is useful in challenging the deficit perspective of the existing literature that negatively identifies students who perform at suboptimal levels through the identification of their “deficiencies” when compared to their White counterparts (e.g., lower SES and concentration into poorly funded schools) (ACE, 2010; Ainsworth-Darnell & Downey, 1998; Bailey et al., 2005; Carter, 2008a, 2008b; Jaret & Reitzes, 2009; Price, 2004) by focusing the exploration of academically related factors within the particular population of interest. In addition to this clarification, Tinto expresses the importance of challenging stereotypes that are reinforced by language (i.e., the common misuse of the term “dropout”) in order to change the way the phenomenon of student departure is examined and addressed. Thus, Tinto developed his theory of student attrition to 1) synthesize what is known about the
character and causes of student departure, 2) clearly explain the longitudinal process of student leaving and 3) capturing the complexity of behaviors and conditions that underlie a student’s choice to leave an institution of higher education (Tinto, 1993). The synthesis of the character and causes of attrition and the holistic approach this model provides in understanding the underlying contributors of student departure presents a realistic reflection of college student experiences. This reflection is useful in the current study’s attempts to explore academic success among African American college students from a strengths-based perspective.

Though Tinto’s model lends itself to the exploration of academic success from a strengths-based perspective, his research has not been without critique. Addressing the development of his research, Tinto wrote:

Like any body of work, the study of student retention lacked complexity and detail. Much of the early work was drawn from quantitative studies of largely residential universities and students of majority backgrounds. As such it did not, in its initial formulation, speak to the experiences of students in other types of institutions, two-and four-year, and of students of different gender, race, ethnicity, income, and orientation. We were, if you will, in the infancy of our work. (Tinto, 2006, p. 3)

However, his commitment to advancing the literature, specifically addressing the gaps between research and practice, led to revisions of earlier models that included the impact of individual cultural factors and institutional settings on retention/attrition (Tinto, 2006). Thus, the components of Tinto’s longitudinal model of student attrition are relevant in this study of African American student success.
Employing positive psychological approaches, I align myself with Gelso and Fretz’s (2001) definition of a counseling psychologist’s identity, which 1) emphasizes normative foundations of development, 2) emphasizes facilitative personal and environmental conditions that lead to adaptive outcomes, 3) attends to person-environment interactions, 4) focuses on prevention rather than intervention, and 5) values diversity and multiculturalism. Thus, I want to examine strengths rather than pathologies and deficits as they relate to academic success in African American college students (i.e., success vs. attrition).

Although Tinto’s model predicts student departure, the same variables identified as critical to determining attrition have also been identified as predictors of academic success (Awad, 2007; Baker, 2008; Carter, 2008b; Jenkins, Harburg, Weissberg, & Donnelly, 2004; Kim & Conrad, 2006). For example, Baker (2008) conducted a study based on the theories of institutional departure (Tinto, 1993) and oppositional culture (Fordham & Ogbu, 1986) that examined the effects of the involvement in extracurricular activities on academic performance. Her sample included 1,907 Black (991 participants) and Latino (916 participants) college students attending 27 different higher educational institutions. Using the National Longitudinal Survey of Freshmen, Baker conducted analyses that examined the predictive ability of six types of extracurricular activities: 1) athletic organizations, 2) Greek letter organizations, 3) political organizations, 4) religious organizations, 5) arts organizations (e.g., musical or theater arts programs), and 6) minority-based student organizations. She found that the type of extracurricular activity in which students were involved, not the time spent in participation, significantly affected academic performance. Particularly, Greek letter involvement emerged as a
negative predictor of GPA for African American female and all male students. Political student organizations were shown to be positive predictors of academic performance, as African American males, and Latinos who were involved in political student organizations reported higher GPAs. Though examining the impact of extracurricular activities on academic performance, Baker also found ethnic identity and high school GPA to be positive predictors of academic performance among her sample. High school GPA showed unique statistical significance, as it was the only variable to emerge as a positive predictor among all participants. Although the theoretical underpinnings of Baker’s research included institutional departure and oppositional culture, she found utility in their exploration of the factors that contribute to academic success. Therefore, employing a strength-based perspective to predict academic success from the variables that comprise Tinto’s longitudinal model of student departure seems warranted and feasible.

Pre-entry Attributes  Goal/Commitments  Institutional Experiences  Integration  Goal/Commitments  Outcome

Figure 1: Tinto’s Longitudinal Model of Institutional Departure
**Explanation of Tinto’s model.** Tinto’s longitudinal model of institutional departure includes factors that relate to 1) the dispositions of individuals who enter higher education, 2) the character of student’s interactional experiences within the institution following entry, and 3) the external forces that sometimes influence a student’s behavior while within the institution (Tinto, 1993).

**Pre-entry attributes.** Though Tinto’s model of institutional departure addresses the interaction between individuals and their institutions of higher education, it also attends to factors present prior to college entry. These factors include family background, skills and abilities, and prior schooling. Common family background variables include socioeconomic status (SES), parental education level, race and ethnicity, and residential community status (e.g., rural, urban, and suburban), all of which contribute to one’s racial identity (Eamon, 2005; Hochschild, 2003; Sellers, Smith, et al., 1998). Skills and abilities commonly refer to an individual’s intellectual/academic ability and social skills (Tinto, 1993). Some examples of these pre-entry attributes include an individual’s grade point average (GPA) in high school and previous leadership experiences. Examples of prior schooling variables are the pedagogical practices during an individual’s experiences with formal education (Davis & Jordan, 1994). Consistent with Tinto’s model, the literature is replete with studies that commonly explore pre-entry attributes and their contribution to academically related outcomes (Bennett, 2002; Ford, 1996; Guiffrida, 2005; Ladson-Billings, 2006; Rovai, Gallien, & Wighting, 2005).

**Goals and commitments.** This section of Tinto’s model is comprised of intentions, goal and institutional commitments, and external commitments. Intentions pertain to an individual’s desired outcome of initial college entry, whether they are
educational goals or occupational goals (Tinto, 1993). Intentions, especially those that are vocational, have importance as Tinto wrote that the higher an individual’s level of educational or occupational goals, the greater the likelihood of college completion. Additionally, the stronger the connection between the goal of college completion and other values (i.e., family of origin, communal, or cultural values and beliefs), the greater the likelihood of college completion (Tinto, 1993). For example, a student 1) who has a goal of completing a bachelor’s degree because of the belief that an undergraduate degree will afford more opportunity for advancement (i.e., vocational, educational, financial, societal) and 2) whose belief is reinforced by messages from the student’s family or culture, is more likely to continue academic pursuits in order to obtain his or her goal than a student who does not possess this goal or reinforcing messages. It is important to note that not all individuals who enter institutions of higher education have the intention or goal of degree completion (Bean, 1990; Seidman, 2005; Tinto, 1993). For example, in addition to educational and occupational aspirations, some students endorse attending college for personal reasons of developing oneself and for “default” reasons of having no better alternatives or options (Côté & Levine, 1997; Phinney, Dennis, & Osorio, 2006).

Commitment refers to the degree to which an individual is wedded to set goals, and to the institution of higher education (Tinto, 1993). Commitment directly relates to the departure from institutions of higher education, as individuals who lack the commitment to achieve their goals are more likely to depart from institutions of higher education than individuals who possess that commitment (Bean, 1990; Tinto, 1993). Some researchers have concluded that commitment is more closely related to academic outcomes that contribute to student persistence in college than other pre-entry attributes
such as race and parental education (Mallette & Cabrera, 1991; Swail, Redd, & Perna, 2003).

External commitments are responsibilities and allegiances that alter an individual’s intentions and goal and institutional commitments upon entry and throughout matriculation. The ability to pay for college and obligations to associations outside of the institution of higher education, such as communities other than that of the campus and individuals’ pre-existing values, commonly comprise the external commitment dimension (Tinto, 1993). Underlying these obligations to associations external to the institution of higher education, researchers have examined the contribution of pre-existing communal values on academic persistence and posit that when pre-existing values are supportive of college success, student persistence is likely to be positively influenced (Carson, 2009; Tinto, 1993; Tyler et al., 2008). Conversely, when values external to the institution of higher education are contradictory or inconsistent with institutional values, student departure may be a more common occurrence (Guiffrida, 2006; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991; Tinto, 1993). Regarding the latter, individuals may be forced to partially reject their own pre-existing values and membership in communities that have been central to their identity development and that have offered significant systems of support (Campbell & Fleming, 2000; Miller, 1994).

Researchers have identified African American students’ relationships with family and friends from home as crucial to their academic success (Carson, 2009; Guiffrida & Douthit, 2010). Examining the potential rejection of home values, Guiffrida and Douthit (2010) wrote that “it is logical to hypothesize that breaking away from families and friends from home might be even more important for [African American students]” due
to the discontinuity between home and school environments (p. 313). Qualitative studies addressing this hypothesis are more easily found in the literature than quantitative studies as it is argued that qualitative methods allow for a more appropriate assessment, from the student perspective, of the complexities of concepts like familial support and college student development (Guiffrida, 2005; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991). Interviewing 99 African American students categorized as leavers (15 participants), low achievers (65 participants), and high achievers (19 participants), Guiffrida (2005) found variability in students’ perception of familial support and thus, detachment. In his study, high achievers commonly described emotional, academic, and financial support received from their families where leavers and low achievers commonly described a lack of familial support.

Using a mixed methods approach, Williamson (2010) conducted a study with 99 Black undergraduate males (27 African, 24 African American, 25 Caribbean, and 23 Biracial) who were majoring in the science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) fields to assess the academic experiences and familial role of STEM majors at a PWI. Of the 99 participants completing an online survey assessment, six agreed to participate in the follow-up qualitative interview. Williamson found that the majority of the participants were pleased with the campus climate, as 62% reported feeling satisfied or very satisfied with the academic climate as a STEM major, and thus were committed to the institution, to earning good grades, and to graduating from college. Regarding familial role, five of the six interviewees identified their families as pivotal factors in their attending college. Consistent with the high achievers in Guiffrida’s (2005) study,
interviewees also identified receiving financial, emotional, and educational support from their families.

The ability to pay for college has been shown to be a complex contributor to student departure (DesJardins, Ahlburg, & McCall, 2002; Singell, 2003; Tinto, 1993). Not only do finances influence whether an individual persists to degree completion, but financial ability also influences 1) the initial choice of attending an institution of higher education, 2) which college or university to attend, and 3) how much education is affordable (Tinto, 1993). A lack of finances may result in students obtaining part-time employment while attending college, which can isolate individuals from the larger campus community, faculty members, and peer groups (Cabrera, Nora & Castañeda, 1992). Isolation within the higher educational institution and financial worries have the potential to negatively impact academic success as they have been identified as distracters from academic responsibilities (e.g., studying) (Maton & Hrabowski, 2004).

**Institutional experiences.** This component of Tinto’s model includes formal and informal academic and social interactions that are components of an institution’s climate. Formal academic institutional experiences are comprised of an individual’s academic performances. Informal academic institutional experiences are those of student and faculty and/or staff interactions (e.g., interactions outside of class/instruction) (Tinto, 1993). Formal social institutional experiences include extracurricular activities (e.g., team sports), and informal social institutional experiences incorporate peer group interactions (Tinto, 1993). Tinto argues that though prior attributes may influence an individual’s experiences while within the institution of higher education, the impact of these attributes are contingent on both the quality of individual interactions with members
of the institution and the individual’s perceptions of whether interactions meet his or her needs and interests (Tinto, 1993). The more institutional interactions satisfy the needs and interests of an individual, the more likely that individual is to persist until degree completion. Thus, this theory adequately places significant attention on factors extant after college entry.

Integration. Integration, both academically and socially, follow the interactional experiences between the individual and the institution of higher education. Sometimes referred to as adjustment (Baker & Siryk, 1989a), integration pertains to an individual’s ability to transition within the institution (Ancis et al., 2000; Baker & Siryk, 1989a; Tinto, 1993). Interactive experiences that promote integration academically and socially contribute to the likelihood that an individual will persist until degree completion. Thus, these positive experiences strengthen one’s commitment to initial goals of degree completion and commitment to the institution of higher education. However, interactive experiences that promote further marginalization of individuals (i.e., incongruence or isolation) will contribute to the reevaluation of the commitment to personal goals and commitments to the institution. In this case, it is more likely that an individual may not persist to degree completion at the institution he or she currently attends.

Incongruence (i.e., lack of institutional fit) refers to an individual’s perception of his or herself as being discordant with the institution of higher education (Tinto, 1993). This perception arises as a result of 1) an individual’s personal appraisal of experiences within the institution as supportive and beneficial or marginalizing and malintegrative and 2) the mismatch between his or her needs, interests, abilities and preferences and the needs, interests, abilities, and preferences of the institution (Tinto, 1993). Isolation
pertains to an absence of sufficient interactions through which integration may be achieved (Tinto, 1993). Thus, when considering integration and adjustment, importance is placed on the perspective of the student rather than the reports of the institution, as withdrawal reflects an individual’s perspective that continuing at the institution would not be in his or her best interest.

**Goals and commitments revisited.** After integration (or lack of integration), an individual reevaluates one’s intentions for entering the institution of higher education and commitments to these intentions and the particular institution. Favorable reevaluations are more likely to contribute to an individual’s decision to persist until degree completion than unfavorable reevaluations (Tinto, 1993).

**Outcome.** This dimension refers to an individual’s departure decision. Overall, Tinto’s longitudinal model of student departure argues that individual departure from institutions of higher education arise out of a longitudinal process of interactions between the individual, who possesses particular attributes, skills, financial resources, prior educational experiences, intentions and commitments, and the institution, which is comprised of academic and social systems. Student departure centers on an individual’s perception of interactions within the institution and whether these interactions are considered to be rewarding (Tinto, 1993). Persistence and academic success require that an individual transition to college through integrative interactional experiences.

Based on this model, the current study will specifically examine the extent to which racial identity, goals, and institutional climate predict academic success among African American college students. These particular variables were chosen because they are reflective of each of the dimensions that comprise Tinto’s (1993) model and because
they also are important constructs in the counseling psychology literature (Ancis et al., 2000; Chavous, 2005; Constantine, Watt, Gainor, & Warren, 2005; Cross, 1971; Guiffrida & Douthit, 2010; Helm et al., 1998; Helms, 1995; Parham & Helms, 1981). Racial identity will be considered a pre-entry attribute in this study as students come to higher educational institutions with certain self-perceptions and beliefs. Specifically, racial identity was selected among other social locations that comprise pre-entry attributes as it is commonly studied in research relating to the academic success of African American students (Chavous et al., 2003; Cokley & Chapman, 2008; Hamilton, 2009; Reid, 2013). To assess this variable as a pre-entry attribute, and to control for the changes in identity that may occur from an individual’s interactions within the institution, only college freshmen will be solicited. Goals are reflective of Tinto’s (1993) second dimension of his longitudinal model and institutional climate is reflective of one’s institutional experiences and integration within the institution.

Though Tinto’s longitudinal model of student departure was developed in order to change the way the phenomenon of student departure is examined and addressed, employing Tinto’s model to explore academic success can enhance the existing literature that explores academically related outcomes among African American college students. Tinto’s longitudinal model of student departure is comprised of dimensions that address both intrapsychic and contextual factors relating to academic outcomes while also highlighting the exchange between individual (i.e., intrapsychic) and environmental (i.e., contextual) factors. This model structure represents a realistic reflection of daily college student experiences. Additionally, Tinto emphasizes the importance of understanding the perspective of the student population while exploring academically related outcomes.
Exploring this individual student perspective allows for the actual experience of the student to be assessed during research as opposed to any secondary outcome or perceived experience (e.g., campus cohesion, embraced diversity) as reported by the institution. Since Tinto’s longitudinal model of student departure includes dimensions that address intrapsychic factors, campus environmental factors, and the contextual forces that sometimes influence a student’s behavior within the institution (i.e., the exchange between the intrapsychic and contextual factors), it lends itself to frame the exploration of factors that have commonly emerged within the literature regarding academically related outcomes among African American students.

Utilizing Tinto’s longitudinal model of institutional departure, racial identity will be reflective of the pre-entry attributes dimension, goal commitment will be reflective of the goal commitments dimension, and institutional climate will be reflective on the institutional experiences and interaction dimensions in this study’s exploration of the predictors of academic success among African American college students. In addition to addressing whether racial identity, goal commitment, and institutional climate predict academic success among African American college students, this study will also explore the manifestation of racial identity using two leading racial identity measures. Exploring the pre-entry attribute of racial identity is important to the purposes of this study as racial identity has been commonly found to be a significant predictor, either positively or negatively, of academic success among African American college students (Chavous et al., 2003; Reid, 2013; Sellers, Chavous, et al., 1998). This “two-pronged” approach to assessing an individual’s racial identity will be implemented in order to address the inconclusive findings (i.e., the emerging positive or negative contributing effects) that
surround the factor of racial identity within the literature. The effects of racial identity on academically related outcomes have been inconsistent throughout the literature (Cross, 1971; Ogbu, 2003; Parham & Helms, 1981; Vandiver et al., 2002; Vandiver et al., 2001) and continue to contribute to the lack of understanding regarding its impact on academic success among African American students. Marks, Settles, Cooke, Morgan, and Sellers (2004) argued that inconsistent findings regarding whether racial identity serves as a protective or risk factor among African Americans would continue to exist until an overarching theory and definition of racial identity is developed. Before such occurs, it is important to understand which measure of racial identity better predicts academic success. This study aims to address that concern.

To explore the predictive ability of racial identity, this study will employ the Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity (MIBI-Sellers et al., 1997) and the Cross Racial Identity Scale (CRIS-Vandiver et al., 2001) whose theoretical foundations will be discussed in depth in a following section. The inclusion of both the MIBI and the CRIS will allow for a critical analysis of two of the leading racial identity measures as predictors of academic success among African American college students. The CRIS, which was based on Cross’ Nigrescence theory (1971), is the predecessor to current racial identity measures and among the most widely used measures of racial identity in the literature. The MIBI challenges the existing categorization of racial identity measures that employ a hierarchical stage approach by attending to whether an individual finds race to be a central (i.e., the most prominent) identity component (Vandiver, Worrell, & Delgado-Romero, 2009). The inclusion of both measures can aid in understanding the relationship between the presumed similar identities and may ultimately lead to lessening
the inconsistency surrounding the effects of racial identity. Additionally, the framing of the intrapsychic and contextual variables used in this study with Tinto’s longitudinal model of institutional departure can aid in understanding academic success among African American students.

**Critical Analysis of Existing Scholarship**

The literature regarding academic achievement is expansive in its approach to identifying variables that contribute to academic success in African American elementary and secondary students (Cokley, Komaraju, King, Cunningham, & Muhammad, 2003; Delgado, 1995; Graham, 1994; Mickelson, 1990; Ogbu, 2003; Spencer, 1995; Steele, & Aronson, 1995, 1998; Tinto, 1993; Zimmerman, Bandura, & Martinez-Pons, 1992). However, when exploring particular factors that contribute to academic success in African American college students, this literature becomes less expansive. Even less expansive is the literature that explores these predictors among African American students without the comparison to other racial groups (Baber, 2012; Reid, 2013). Moreover, when examining this remaining literature for research that examines intrapsychic (i.e., individual) and contextual factors that contribute to academic success, very few studies remain (Reid, 2013). This limited subset of the literature is overshadowed by the wealth of research on academic achievement that employs comparative designs, which lend themselves to the trite juxtaposition of African American and White students instead of the exploration of unique factors and variability that may lie within the African American college population. The exploration of these unique factors, variability, and the examination of their function among African
American college students is important as it can lead to the determination of whether these variables may bolster the academic success of African American students.

**Academic success.** Terms like college, school and academic persistence, academic achievement, academic attainment, and academic success have all been used to explore school and college based performance outcomes (Chavous, 2005; Cokley & Chapman, 2008; Ladson-Billings, 2006; Lundberg, 2010). Due to these different terms, a number of definitions of academic success exist within the literature. For example, among African American college student populations, academic success has been described as a concept that relates to more than intellectual ability, and refers to one that encompasses achieving a sense of membership, belongingness, and integration within the university’s academic and social communities (Kraft, 1991). Kuh and colleagues (2006) also identify academic success as a construct in which multiple definitions exist that includes persistence to sophomore year, length of time to degree, graduation, standardized scores, student satisfaction, writing proficiency, and many other definitions. Further complicating matters, students themselves also have differing conceptualizations of academic success. Some African American students have identified acceptance into the institution of higher education and giving back to African American student organizations and communities as academic success (Guiffrida, 2004). Others define academic success as completing the first year of coursework (Kraft, 1991). African American students have also concluded that determining a major, taking courses that relate to personal interests, and learning define academic success (Carson, 2009; Harris, Palmer, & Struve, 2011). Last, Kraft (1991) found that some African American identified having a high grade point average as academic success.
Among researchers and academicians, academic success is a construct that has been frequently defined as degree completion and college graduation (Buchman & DiPrete, 2006; Kim & Conrad, 2006), college persistence (Finn & Rock, 1997; Jenkins et al., 2004), campus congruity and campus involvement (Allen, 1992; Davis, 1994; Oliver, Smith & Wilson, 1989; Sedlacek, 1987), and high grade point average (GPA) (Allen, 1992; Awad, 2007; Davis, 1994; Fleming, 1984; Hood, 1992; Palmer & Young, 2008). Based on the literature, it appears that African American college student academic success is multidimensional and encompasses students’ experiences and values individually/internally, socially, and academically. Included in this conceptualization are individuals’ abilities to negotiate an institutional system that may be inconsistent with their values and norms (Davis, 1994; Guiffrida & Douthit, 2010; Helm et al., 1998; Rovai, Gallien, & Whiting, 2005; Sedlacek, 1974, 1987; Steele, 1997), to appraise their performance realistically (Miville & Sedlacek, 1991; Sedlacek, 1974, 1989, 2004; Steele, 1988; Tracey & Sedlacek, 1987), and to be committed and determined to achieve their predetermined goals for higher education (Bean, 1990; Sedlacek, 1974, 1989, 2004; Tinto, 1993; Wright & Kacmar, 1995).

Though many terms and definitions exist regarding academic related outcomes, academic success commonly requires that an individual transition to college through academic and social interactional experiences (Tinto, 1993). For the purposes of this proposed study, academic success will be examined through reports of academic adjustment, social adjustment, and grade point average (GPA). This operationalization of academic success does not exist in the literature particularly in addressing academic success among African American college students. Thus, the current study will add to
the existing literature by providing an operationalization of academic success that measures more than common academic outcome measures like GPA, course grades, and standardized assessments (Awad, 2007; Bridgeman & Wendler, 1991; Hood, 1992; Kraft, 1991; Palmer & Young, 2008). Additionally, the behavioral aspects comprised within this operationalization of academic success may provide the groundwork necessary for the development of institutional interventions that can support adjustment, and thus, academic success.

**Predictors of academic success.**

*Goals.* Based on goal setting theory (Locke & Latham, 1990), goals are posited to affect performance in four ways. First, goal setting directs attention and effort, both cognitively and behaviorally, toward goal-related activities and away from activities that are contradictory to goal achievement. Second, goals “energize” individuals into action, such that higher specified goals lead to more effort. Third, goals affect persistence, in that difficult goals lead to more time spent toward goal attainment. Last, goal setting indirectly affects action “by leading to the arousal, discovery, and/or use of task-relevant knowledge and strategies” (Locke & Latham, 2002, p. 707).

The education literature reports that individuals’ reasons for attending college influence their success within the institution of higher education (Dodd & Anderson, 1996; Klein, Wesson, Hollenbeck, Wright, & DeShon, 2001; Tinto, 1993). Additionally, the stronger the connection between the goal of college completion and other valued goals (i.e., goals important to the individual), the greater the likelihood of college completion (Tinto, 1993). Goal commitment researchers discuss the direct and indirect relationship between goal commitment and the departure from institutions of higher
education (Dodd & Anderson, 1996; Klein, Wesson, Hollenbeck, & Alge, 1999; Tinto, 1993). Specifically, college students who lack the willingness or commitment to achieve their goals (i.e., goals of degree completion at the particular higher educational institution of initial entry) are more likely to depart from institutions of higher education than college students who possess drive and commitment to achieving their goals (Tinto, 1993). Goals have been found to affect performance by “directing attention, mobilizing effort, increasing persistence, and motivating strategy development” (Locke, Shaw, Saari & Latham, 1981, p. 125).

Commitment refers to the degree to which an individual is wedded to an initial specified goal and to the institution of higher education. Researchers have explored commitment and its ability to mediate the relationship between the difficulty of a specified goal and performance (Klein et al., 2001; Locke et al., 1981). In some cases, performance declined as goal difficulty increased and commitment to the initial goal decreased (Erez & Zidon, 1984). Thus, some researchers conclude that commitment is more closely related to academic outcomes than other pre-entry attributes (e.g., race and parental education levels) that are commonly identified in the study of academic outcome measures (Mallette & Cabrera, 1991; Pace, 1980). This conclusion further highlights the need for research that is conducted to explore factors outside of pre-entry attributes.

Examining the effects of commitment on goal type and performance, Dodd and Anderson (1996) conducted a study with 127 “upper-division” undergraduate students enrolled in introductory management courses. Students were asked to complete three objective exams throughout the semester and were allowed to set their goals for each exam at their own discretion. Initial goals were not changed throughout this study, as
participants turned in their goals to the course instructor at the outset of the semester. Commitment data were collected directly after the completion of the exams through a self-reported survey of 15 items. This survey was based on the goal commitment research and scale of Hollenbeck, Klein, O’Leary and Wright (1989) with additional single-scale items included from other goal-commitment scales. Students indicated their agreement of these items through a 7-point Likert type response scale with anchors from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree.”

Dodd and Anderson (1996) hypothesized that goal commitment would moderate the relationship between goal level and performance, in that difficult goals would result in higher levels of performance toward the specified goal when supported by high levels of commitment, and that difficult goals are likely to result in low performance when commitment levels are low. Additionally, these researchers hypothesized that goal type (i.e., easy or difficult) had a direct effect on performance, in that easy goals are more likely to contribute to low performance than would high or low levels of commitment. Goal level, goal commitment, and the interaction of goal level by goal commitment were examined to assess their impact on task performance (Dodd & Anderson; 1996). The authors employed moderated multiple regression, entering goal level in step one, goal commitment on step two, and the interaction of goal level and goal commitment in step three, to examine the aforementioned variables and their relationship with task performance. Significant $R^2$ values emerged at each step for exams one, two, and three, yet, goal level was the only variable for which a significant change in $R^2$ value was produced for all three exams. The examination of the interaction of goal level and goal commitment did not yield any significant changes in $R^2$ statistic (Dodd & Anderson,
1996). Thus, commitment was not found to mediate the relationship between specified goals and performance in their study. Goal level was found to be a significant contributor to performance on all three exams. Though beyond the parameters of their research findings, Dodd and Anderson contend that commitment to a complex initial goal (e.g., high overall semester GPA) is beneficial in “keeping students on track as they juggle demands of courses, jobs, and personal lives” (Dodd & Anderson, 1996, p. 335) but not as necessary when setting goals that are not as complex (i.e., a particular score on an exam). Thus, it is important to assess goal type when exploring its effects on academic outcome scores.

Though goal level was the only variable found to significantly relate to performance on all three exams, the examination of goal commitment remains useful to the academic success literature. This study seeks to contribute to the understanding of goal commitment in academic success, as the literature is limited in its utility of the Hollenbeck and colleagues’ goal commitment scale in college populations. These authors address the importance of examining the effects of goal commitment on the relationship between specified goals and performance, as it cannot be assumed that goal setting results in a commitment to that specified goal (Hollenbeck, Williams, & Klein, 1989; Klein et al., 1999; Locke & Latham, 1990). Though the results of their research suggest that goal level is the best predictor of performance, the authors write that goal commitment may not be a significant contributor to performance when the task is easy, but that it may be most imperative in the relationship between goals and performance where the initial specified goal is complex (i.e., degree attainment).
A few limitations are present within this research. First, Dodd and Anderson employed the modified use of Hollenbeck and colleagues’ goal commitment scale (1989) without establishing the construct validity or reliability of this new measure. Their use of a smaller sample size (n = 127) is another limitation in this research, as it may limit the power of this study and the generalizability of their research findings. Additionally, the failure to report demographic data for their sample and the additional items that were added to the Hollenbeck, Williams, and Klein scale is a significant limitation. Providing this aforementioned information could have allowed researchers to assess the heterogeneity of the study sample, and replicate or adapt Dodd and Anderson’s research methods—both of which could result in a better understanding of goal commitment in specific populations. Dodd and Anderson’s secondary conclusion, that commitment may be a significant factor in the relationship between goals and persistence when goals are complex, is consistent with the Tinto’s (1993) longitudinal model of institutional departure, which underlies the proposed dissertation research. Students are more likely to persist until college completion when they 1) have the goal of college completion, 2) are committed to attaining this initial goal, and 3) are satisfied with their institutions of higher education. The study of commitments to students’ specified goals is imperative in understanding academic success, as not all students who enter institutions of higher education share the same goals or commitments to those goals.

*Racial identity.* Racial identity, a “multidimensional construct made up of components that incorporate a combination of ethnic awareness, sociopolitical attitudes, and cultural or in-group versus out-group preferences” (Chavous et al., 2003, p. 1078), has been found to serve as an important factor in promoting academic success,
particularly for students of color. Researchers have discussed how identity develops “in the context of interpersonal relationships with significant others and in a variety of social/cultural context” (Campbell & Fleming, 2000, p. 7). These contexts, (e.g., the institutional climate), can facilitate academic success, as African American students are likely to be aware of, and affected by, racial/diversity inadequacies that exist on campus (Chavous, 2005). Researchers have explored the contexts of interpersonal relationships and cultural environments and discussed the importance of communities of support for African American students (Davis, 1994; Guiffrida, 2003; Guiffrida & Douthit, 2010; Tinto, 1993), which have the ability to buffer against negative perceptions and malintegrative experiences in higher educational institutions. These negative perceptions of the campus climate are likely to lead to students questioning their commitments to the institution and to their goals for college entry (Tinto, 1993).

Several research studies have been conducted to examine the role of racial identity on academic success (Baber, 2012; Cokley et al., 2003; Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; Jaret & Reitzes, 2009; Ogbu, 2003; Sellers, Chavous, et al., 1998). However, quantitative research that examines the relationship between racial identity and academic success among African American college students solely (i.e., without the comparisons to other racial groups) is in shorter supply (Reid, 2013). Within the scholarship of racial identity and academic success, racial identity has been the subject of contentious debate. Some research posits that for African American students, a positive racial identity is essential to academic success (Campbell & Fleming 2000; Oyserman, Harrison, & Bybee, 2001; Sellers, Smith, et al.; 1998); yet, other researchers purport that a strong identification with an African American racial identity is detrimental to academic
success, as it can contribute to the development of an “oppositional culture” toward academia and other matters that may be considered “White prerogatives” (Fordham, 1988; Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; O’Connor, 1999; Sanders, 1997). Irrespective of this controversy surrounding racial identity, it is consistently found to be a significant predictor, whether positively or negatively, of academic success among African American students (Chavous, Bernat, Schmeelk-Cone, Caldwell, Kohn-Wood, & Zimmerman, 2003; Fordham, 1988; Fordham & Ogbu, 1986; Reid, 2013; Sellers, Chavous, et al., 1998). Consequently, racial identity will be a fundamental factor in examining academic success for my dissertation.

To address the controversy surrounding the effects of racial identity on academic wellbeing, Sellers, Chavous, and Cooke (1998) employed a phenomenological approach in exploring this phenomenon. These authors contend that a major limitation to the racial identity scholarship is the “implicit assumption that race is the most central aspect of self for all African Americans” (p. 11). This limitation is consistent with my review of this literature and the aforementioned controversy, as prevalent measures of racial identity (e.g., Cross Racial Identity Scale, Racial Identity Attitude Scale-Black) commonly and erroneously presume racial identity to be the most relevant component of identity development for African Americans without the adequate assessment of individuals’ identity development (Cross, 1971; Parham & Helms, 1981; Sellers, Chavous, et al., 1998). Additionally, Sellers, Cook, et al. (1998) identified a failure to distinguish between various aspects and dimension of racial identity as a second limitation in the existing literature. Particularly, these authors argued that the existing literature does not explore the difference between an individual’s perception of “what it means to be Black”
and one’s identification with being Black (p. 11). Without this differentiation, previous research has confounded an individual’s philosophy of race with the importance it plays in one’s daily living (i.e., collapsing beliefs of “Blackness” with identification with being Black). This error can contribute to an over identification of individuals as racially centralized (i.e., strong racial identity development) when they may not perceive race to be an important factor in their day-to-day lives.

In response to the limitations and erroneous assumptions of the existing literature, Sellers, Smith, et al. (1998) developed the Multidimensional Model of Racial Identity (MMRI) to identify racial identity consistently with an individual’s self-concept of relation to membership within a race. The major assumption of this theoretical model is that the salience of race in an individual’s self-concept moderates whether beliefs pertaining to the meaning of race will influence other phenomena (e.g., identity development, relationship formation, and academic achievement). This model has four underlying assumptions. The first assumption is that identities are situationally influenced as well as stable properties of the individual. The second assumption is that individuals possess a number of identities that are hierarchically ordered. The third assumption is that individuals’ perception of their racial identity is the most valid indicator of their identity. The fourth assumption is that the status of an individual’s racial identity, as opposed to the development, is important, as emphasis is placed on the individual’s perception of what it means to be Black. Unlike other theoretical models of racial identity, the underlying assumptions associated with the MMRI are all testable. Thus, this model presents a “means by which to assess the validity of the conceptual model” (Sellers, Smith, et al., 1998, p.23).
The MMRI employs a phenomenological approach to emphasize an individual’s self-perception of what it means to be African American and the significance of race in one’s self-concept among four dimensions (Sellers, Smith, et al., 1998). The first dimension explores identity salience, the second dimension investigates the centrality of the identity, the third dimension investigates the ideology associated with identity, and the fourth dimension explores the regard in which the person holds the group associated with the identity. One strength of this model is that it does not define what it means to be African American, but instead emphasizes the importance of examining the concept of racial identity from the individual’s perspective.

Sellers, Smith, et al. (1998) reported that the literature regarding African American identity shows four ideological categories of racial identity: nationalist, minority, assimilation, and humanist. In describing the nationalist ideology, the researchers specified that individuals in this category express the uniqueness of being Black and view the experiences of African Americans to be distinctly different from the experiences of other groups. Additionally, individuals who subscribe to the nationalist ideology believe that African Americans should be in control of their own destiny and have little input from individuals outside of their cultural group. Individuals subscribing to the minority ideology emphasize the similarities between African Americans and other marginalized groups and are “acutely aware” of ongoing oppression and discrimination. Those who subscribe to the assimilationist ideology place an emphasis on the similarities between all Americans regardless of color. These individuals accentuate their American identity and attempt to move into the mainstream culture as much as possible. Sellers and colleagues clarify that these individuals do not necessarily “imply a de-emphasis in
the importance of being African American, nor imply a lack of recognition of racism in America” but that assimilationists see that African Americans have a role in mainstream society (Sellers, Chavous, et al., 1998, p. 13). Individuals who subscribe to the humanist ideology dismiss defining characteristics such as race, gender, and socioeconomic status and instead believe in the “human race” as the sole defining characteristic. These individuals look for similarities among all humans and are concerned with global issues that affect all human life such as environmental concerns and world peace. Though an individual is somewhat stable across different situations when considering his or her racial centrality and racial ideology, he or she may subscribe to different ideological categories in different systems (e.g., nationalist political views but minority views regarding education).

To test the utility of this theoretical model and its components, Sellers, Chavous, and Cooke (1998) conducted a study exploring the effects of the two dimensions, racial centrality and racial ideology, on African American college students’ academic performance. Racial centrality was defined as the extent to which a person “normatively defines herself or himself with regard to race” (i.e., whether race is a stable part of an individual’s identity and self-concept) and racial ideology as the “meaning that the individual ascribes to being Black” (i.e., general attributes, characteristics, and values the individual associates with African Americans) (p. 12). Believing that both racial ideology and racial centrality remain stable across different situations, the researchers hypothesized that racial ideology would be significant to the academic performance of the students who identified race as a central aspect of their self-concept. Participants were 248 undergraduate students from an HBCU and PWI in the mid-Atlantic region of
the United States who identified as African American. Sixty-five percent (n=163), attended the PWI while 85 students attended the HBCU. Roughly 30% of the sample population was male and preliminary analysis showed the distribution of gender to be consistent at both institutions. The grade level distribution was as follows: 121 first-year participants, 79 second-year participants, 29 third-year participants, 17 fourth-year participants, and two participants who did not indicate their academic year. The reported median annual family income was $53,700. However, when stratified by institution, participants who attended the HBCU reported a significantly lower annual income than participants attending the PWI, at $48,800 and $58,000 respectively.

To test their hypothesis, participants completed the Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity (MIBI-Sellers et al., 1997) and self-reported their cumulative GPA in either introductory psychology courses or at a course “mass pretesting session” (p. 16). The revised MIBI is a 56-item paper-and-pencil assessment that measures the same three subscales (i.e., centrality, regard, and ideology) of the original a 71-item measure. A 7-point Likert-type response scale is provided for participants to indicate their agreement with each item. A response of “1” indicates “strongly disagree” and a response of “7” indicates “strongly agree.” The researchers found that the assimilation subscale scores had a significant negative association with GPA, in that individuals who highly identified with the assimilationist ideology were less likely to report high GPAs. Additionally, the researchers found that centrality was negatively related to assimilationist and humanist ideologies, and positively related to nationalist and minority ideologies. The interpretation of the analysis of variance results from a larger study, which included the present sample, showed that differences were also found by institution type. African
American students attending the PWI were more likely to report higher assimilationist, humanist ideologies, and less likely to subscribe to the nationalist ideology than those attending the HBCU. Overall, multiple statistical analyses showed that individuals with a more centralized racial identity were more likely to report higher GPAs, and both the assimilationist and nationalist ideologies were negatively associated with GPA (Sellers, Chavous, et al., 1998). The effects of centrality on academic outcomes like GPA shown in Sellers, Chavous, and Cook’s (1998) research support the idea that racial identity and its multidimensional components manifest differently in African Americans. Their work offers a prime example for future research and moreover shows the importance of assessing the salience of this identity component through exploring centrality, ideology, and regard in the proposed research.

Where Sellers and colleagues found racial identity to be a protective factor for academic performance among African Americans to an extent (i.e., for individuals with centralized racial identities who endorse certain ideologies), the racial identity research, as a whole, is largely inconclusive regarding the effects of racial identity on academic related outcomes. Cross and his colleagues have been essential researchers in the scholarship of racial identity over the past 40 years. Introduced as the theory of Nigrescence, a French term for “the process of becoming Black” (Cross, 1971, 1991, 1995), Black racial identity development was described by Cross as the socialization process of African Americans where one’s identity, worldview, and value systems change as a result of an encounter experience. His original Nigrescence theory began with the “Pre-encounter” stage, where an individual’s identity is characterized by an endorsement of White cultural values and norms, inattention to race, denial of the
importance of race, miseducation about race, or self-hatred about Black race (Cross, 1991, 1995; Vandiver et al., 2002; Vandiver et al., 2001; Worrell, Cross, and Vandiver, 2001). In the second stage, the “Encounter” stage, an individual becomes aware of one’s miseducation about race through the exposure to gaps and conflicts in one’s current identity, and begins to reexamine one’s reference group. The third stage, “Immersion-Emersion,” is characterized by an individual’s desire to correct or compensate for one’s miseducation. In this stage, an individual sheds old identity conceptualizations and adopts a new “pro-Black” ideology. At its extreme, this stage can result in a strong disdain for all things considered White. In the following “Internalization” stage, the individual adopts a new ideology and strongly identifies with Black culture. Where some individuals’ Nigrescence process ends here, others transition to a fifth stage, the “Internalization-Commitment” stage. This fifth stage is characterized by a secure embracing of Black identity and a commitment to educating and personal involvement with others both within and outside of the African American race.

Cross revised his 1971 Nigrescence theory in 1991 and 2000 to include multiple identity clusters at each stage. The revised Nigrescence theory (1991) is composed of four stages, omitting the fifth “Internalization-Commitment” stage. Additionally, these revised stages are representative of overarching themes instead of identities, as the stages existed in the original theory. The new identity clusters for the revised model are as follows: assimilation and anti-Black identities of the Pre-Encounter stage, intense Black involvement and anti-White identities of the Immersion-Emersion stage, and Black nationalist (Afrocentricity), biculturalist, and multiculturalist identities in the Internalization stage. The assimilation identity is characterized by an American reference
group orientation and a view of race as insignificant. Unlike assimilationist, the anti-
Black identity is characterized by a miseducation (i.e., endorsing negative stereotypes
about African Americans) about race and self-hatred (i.e., personal negative views)
pertaining to one’s race. Intense Black involvement is characterized by an
“overromanticized immersion into the Black experience” whereas anti-White identity is
characterized by a rejection of anything defined as White (Vandiver et al., 2002, p. 72).
The Afrocentric/Black nationalist identity is characterized by a sole emphasis on
empowering and promoting the Black community. Conversely, the biculturalist and
multiculturalist identities are characterized by an emphasis on building alliances with
communities outside of the African American race. The two identities differ in that the
biculturalist identity emphasizes attention to one other cultural identity in conjunction
with a positive Black identity and self-acceptance whereas the multiculturalist identity
emphasizes the importance of at least two other cultural identities in addition to a positive
Black identity (Vandiver et al., 2002).

To support the development of a scale to measure the components of this revised
model, Cross and colleagues expanded the revised model in 2000 to restructure the
identity clusters as follows: assimilation, miseducation, and self-hatred identities of the
Pre-Encounter stage, intense Black involvement and anti-White identities of the
Immersion-Emersion stage, and Afrocentricity/Black nationalist, biculturalist, and
multiculturalist identities in the Internalization stage. Shifting from two identity clusters
in the Pre-Encounter stage of the revised Nigrescence model, the anti-Black identity was
developed into two defining identities in the expanded model. The miseducation identity
is characterized by negative stereotypical views of African Americans as a whole, where
the self-hatred identity is characterized by negative personal views associated with being Black. Though no identities are associated with the Encounter stage in either the revised or expanded models, this stage is characterized by the process of an individual’s reevaluation of one’s reference group orientation (i.e., social group membership or social locations such as race, gender, or sexual orientation), such that intense and discomforting experiences that happen in this stage propel individuals to the Immersion-Emersion stage.

Unlike the MIBI, which assesses whether an individual finds race to be a central component of his or her identity in addition to assessing an individual’s personal and public perceptions of Black identity (i.e., private and public regard), the CRIS measures the multiple identity clusters of the four stages of Cross’ expanded Nigrescence theory without accounting for an individual’s definition and perception of race. Vandiver et al. (2002) hypothesized that exploratory factor analysis would result in six factors consistent with the expanded model of Nigrescence and the measurable CRIS subscales. Six of the eight identities were concluded to be measurable: Pre-Encounter Assimilation, Pre-Encounter Miseducation, Pre-Encounter Self-Hatred, Immersion-Emersion Anti-White, Internalization Multiculturalist Inclusive, and Internalization Black Nationalist/Afrocentricity. The biculturalist identity was excluded as a subscale due to its close association with the multiculturist identity. The authors stated, “the Biculturalist identity describes the possibility that Blacks have another salient cultural identity beyond Blackness. Most people, in reality, are believed to possess multiple cultural identities. Thus, in all likelihood, Multiculturalists would endorse items for both the Biculturalist and Multiculturalist identities, resulting in a lack of distinction between the two constructs” (Vandiver et al., 2002, p. 73). Intense Black involvement was similarly
excluded as a consequence of its association with the Black nationalist identity. To test their hypothesis, Vandiver et al. (2002) conducted research with 296 African American college students who attended a mid-Atlantic predominantly White institution (PWI). Around 26% of the sample were male, 72% were female, and about two percent did not specify gender. Participants ranged in age from 17 to 43, with a mean age of 20.64 years. Grade point average (GPA) was based on a four-point scale was self-reported and ranged from 1.00 to 4.00, with a mean GPA of 2.92. Majority of participants were undergraduate students ($n = 264$) and self-classified as working ($n = 127$) or middle ($n = 143$) class.

Based on factor analytic assumptions (i.e., parallel analysis, minimum loading of three items on each factor, minimum factor coefficient of $| .50 |$ for each item, and factor interpretation ability), six factors were extracted and retained. Subscale items loaded consistently on the same factor and factor intercorrelations ranged from $| .01 |$ to $| .26 |$ ($Mdn = | .09 |$). The largest intercorrelation was found to exist between the anti-White and Black nationalist factors. Thus, the authors engaged in further analyses to correct for the intercorrelation between the anti-White and Black nationalist factors. The Black nationalist subscale was renamed “Afrocentric” as content analyses showed that the Black nationalist items most correlated with other Black nationalist items and least correlated with anti-White items all contained the term “Afrocentric” in the scale item. All other subscales retained the name of their factors.

To test the validity of their resulting constructs, Vandiver et al. (2002) conducted confirmatory factor analyses and convergent validity analyses in comparison with the Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity (MIBI; Sellers, Smith, et al., 1998). The
authors hypothesized that the aforementioned six-factor model would best fit the CRIS when compared with other factor model versions. Moreover, it was hypothesized that positive relationships would exist between particular CRIS factors and the MIBI as an emphasis (or de-emphasis) of race is found to exist between both measures. Particularly, Vandiver et al. (2002) posed the following hypotheses: 1) a positive relationship would exist between anti-White and Afrocentric factors and the Centrality and Nationalist subscales due to the importance placed on race, 2) a positive relationship would exist between the assimilation factors and the Assimilation and Humanist subscales due to the de-emphasis on race, 3) a positive relationship will exist between the multiculturalist inclusive and Humanist and Oppressed Minority subscales due to their race emphasis, 4) a negative relationship would exist between the assimilation factor and the Centrality subscale due to the difference in race emphasis, 5) a negative relationship would exist between anti-White factors and the Humanist subscale due to the difference in emphasis on race, 6) a negative relationship would exist between the miseducation factor and the Public Regard subscale, and 7) a negative relationship would exist between the self-hatred factor and the Private regard subscale.

Vandiver et al. (2002) administered the CRIS and MIBI to 336 African American college students who attended a mid-Atlantic predominantly White institution (PWI). Female participants comprised 63% of the sample, 35% of the sample were male, and 2% did not indicate gender. Participants ranged in age from 17 to 59, with a mean age of 20.68 years. Self-reported grade point average (GPA) was based on a four-point scale and ranged from .50 to 4.00, with a mean GPA of 2.77. Majority of participants were undergraduate students (n = 313) and self-classified as working (n = 165) or middle (n =
As a result of this survey administration, the six-factor model was shown to best fit CRIS scale structure based on the goodness of fit chi-squared statistic, the chi-square to degrees of freedom ratio, the comparative fit index (CFI), and the root-mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) values, based on a 90% confidence interval. Additionally, results of the seven hypotheses test were as follows: 1) The relationship between anti-White and Centrality was not significant. The relationship between anti-White and Nationalist was significantly positive. The relationship between Afrocentric and Centrality was significantly positive. The relationship between Afrocentric and Nationalist was significantly positive. 2) The relationship between assimilation and MIBI Assimilation was significantly positive. The relationship between assimilation and Humanist was significantly positive. 3) The relationship between multiculturalist and Humanist was significantly positive. The relationship between multiculturalist and Oppressed Minority was significantly positive. 4) The relationship between assimilation and Centrality was significantly negative. 5) The relationship between anti-White and Humanist significantly negative. 6) The relationship between miseducation and Public Regard was insignificant. 7) The relationship between self-hatred and Private Regard was significantly negative.

The most widely used models and measures of racial identity have inconsistently explained the effects of racial identity on academically related outcomes (Cross, 1971; Parham & Helms, 1981; Vandiver et al., 2002; Vandiver et al., 2001). This inconsistency has further contributed to the complexity in understanding this concept and its relation to academic success in African Americans. However, regardless of its inconsistently explained effects on academically related outcomes, racial identity is commonly found to
be a significant predictor variable (Anglin & Wade, 2007; Campbell & Fleming, 2000; Cokely & Chapman, 2008; Elion, Wang, Stanley, & French, 2012; Hamilton, 2009). Thus, it will be fundamental in the exploration of academic success in this proposed study.

The inclusion of both the MIBI and the CRIS are imperative to the exploration of racial identity and its effects on academic success among African American college students as both play a unique part in addressing the ongoing controversy in the literature. Where racial identity has been inconclusively shown to be a protective and a risk factor, Sellers et al. argue that this is because a large amount of the literature neglects to assess whether race is a central component to one’s identity before classifying a particular stage of racial identity development or defining race for an individual. Moreover, much of the literature examining racial identity employs the CRIS, which unlike the MIBI, may erroneously assume that race for African Americans is the most important identity factor, and classifies those not embodying race as a central identity component in a lower racial identity development stage. Having the additional assessment component offered by the MIBI (i.e., an assessment of whether an individual identifies race to be central to his or her identity) in conjunction with the traditional and widely used stage assessment of the CRIS can begin to provide answers regarding the debate on the effects of racial identity on academic outcomes. Specifically, having both assessment tools can aid in understanding the relationship between identities that are perceived to be similar among both theories and measures.

_Institutional climate._ Institutional climate, an interpretation of an institution’s environment, pertains to individuals’ perception of their level of comfort while attending
a particular institution of higher education while considering their received social support, or their perception of available social support (Davis, 1994; Edman & Brazil, 2009). Studying institutional climate provides insight about the beliefs, attitudes, values, expectations, practices, routines, and behaviors that have perpetuated a specific cultural system which has been sustained over time (Chavous, 2005; Schein 1985). Thus, the climate of the higher educational institution contains socialization and interactional processes, which can directly contribute to an individual’s ability to adjust academically and socially.

African American college student retention and academic achievement are as greatly affected by the campus climate and academic environment as they are by individual and internal factors like academic ability (Martin, 1990). African American students are more likely to succeed academically and persist toward degree attainment when they perceive their environments to be supportive, equitable, and unbiased (Chavous, 2005). However, for African American students attending predominantly White institutions (PWIs) of higher education, the possible lack of racial and cultural diversity, the scarcity of “student subcultures,” and the presence of racial tension between majority group members and students of color can lead to malintegrative experiences (Chavous, 2005; Tinto, 1993). “Negative or malintegrative experiences serve to weaken intentions and commitments, especially commitment to the institution, and thereby enhance the likelihood of leaving” (Tinto, 1993, p. 115). The presence of student subcultures and critical mass, defined by Tinto (1993) as “a sufficient number of persons of like backgrounds and interest from which viable communities can be formed,” (p. 59) can provide opportunities for institutional support, and in turn, strengthen commitments.
Thus, it is the positive and integrative experiences that reinforce the individual’s commitment to the goal of college completion, and moreover, to the particular higher educational institution of initial entry. The cultural climate of the higher educational institution, relationships with both faculty and peers, and an individual’s personal involvement on campus comprise integrative experiences within the college or university. Accordingly, these variables will be essential to the current examination of African American college student academic success.

The climate of a higher educational institution includes socialization and interactional processes that directly and indirectly contribute to academic and social integration, and thus, academic success (Tinto, 1993). Therefore, it is important to address individuals’ perceptions of their experiences while within their particular institutions of higher education. Demonstrating the importance of individuals’ perceptions, Ancis, Sedlacek, and Mohr (2000) used the Cultural Attitudes and Climate Questionnaire (CACQ; Helm et al., 1998) to assess students’ general and specific experiences of the institutional climate and interactions with faculty and peers of the same and differing races. The CACQ, which consists of 45 items that assess racial tension, cross-cultural comfort, diversity awareness, racial pressures, residence hall tension, fair treatment, faculty racism, respect for other cultures, lack of support, comfort with own culture, and overall satisfaction with the institution of higher education, was administered via mail to 578 undergraduate freshmen and juniors attending a PWI. The study sample was racially diverse, as 136 participants self-identified as African American, 130 self-identified as Asian American, 77 self-identified as Latino, and 235 self-identified as White. Participants responded to questionnaire items using a 5-point
Likert type scale, where “1” indicates “strongly disagree” and “5” indicates “strongly agree.” An “NA” category is also included in this Likert scale for items that may not be applicable to participants. Responses on subscales are summed to assess an individual’s perception of the campus environment, such that higher levels of subscale scores are indicative of greater endorsement of that subscale dimension. Helm et al. (1998) reported that higher subscale scores in the dimensions racial tension and lack of support negatively relate to overall institutional satisfaction.

Multivariate analysis of variance was conducted to assess the racial group differences across the 11 dimensions of the CACQ. The researchers found that African American students perceived and experienced significantly more racial conflict than did their White and Asian American counterparts (racial tension, \(F(3, 536) = 6.62, p < .002\)), and perceived significantly more residence hall tension that White students \(F(3, 401) = 5.41, p < .001\). White students reported significantly greater respect for other cultures \(F(3, 547) = 10.39, p < .001\] and experienced significantly greater overall institutional satisfaction \(F(3, 557) = 5.67, p < .008\] than did African American and Asian American students. African American and Asian American students reported significantly more experiences of faculty racism than their White counterparts \(F(3, 571) = 9.16, p < .001\]. Conversely, White students reported significantly fairer treatment \(F(3, 567) = 5.78, p < .007\] than did African American and Asian American students. African American and Latino students reported significantly greater cross cultural comfort \(F(3, 518) = 5.78, p < .007\] than did White students (Ancis et al., 2000). The researchers’ results support the idea that students of color experience and perceive their institutions of higher education differently than their White counterparts, and moreover,
differently across groups of color. Though Ancis et al. (2000) employed the CACQ in a comparative research design, its utility in a within-group design (i.e., without the comparison to other racial student groups) can be equally beneficial and lead to a greater understanding African American college students’ perceptions of their institutional climates. Furthermore, exploring the unique perspective provided through students’ report of institutional climate might provide a better understanding of the effects of institutional climate on academic success.

Relative literature combining factors. As discussed earlier, limitations exist in the scholarship concerning academic success in African American college students. A significant limitation is the lack of research that explores a combination of intrapsychic and contextual factors within the African American student population. Of the literature that employs a combined approach to exploring this phenomenon, much of it does so through a comparative nature, where African American students are juxtaposed to their White counterparts or with other students of color. Sedlacek, a leading researcher of student experiences within institutions of higher education, has conducted a number of studies since the late 1960s that explore the effects of intrapsychic variables on outcome variables such as attrition and graduation rates (DiCasare, Sedlacek, & Brooks, 1972; Mohr, Eiche, & Sedlacek, 1998), student success (Ancis & Sedlacek, 1997; Pfeifer & Sedlacek, 1971; Sedlacek, & Adams-Gaston, 1992), student satisfaction (Schmidt & Sedlacek, 1972), interracial relationships, multicultural relationships and campus environment (Ancis et al., 2000; Carter, White, & Sedlacek, 1987; Minatoya, & Sedlacek, 1981, 1984; Sedlacek, 1995), and student persistence (Miville & Sedlacek, 1991).
Particularly, Sedlacek’s research on noncognitive (i.e., non-academic, non-intellectual or psychosocial) factors relevant in academic success in students of color changed the focus of this scholarship from exploring innate and intellectual abilities, to attending to non-academic and contextual variables that have been shown to better predict academic success in student populations of color, particularly African American students (DiCasare et al., 1972; Pfeifer & Sedlacek, 1971; Sedlacek, 1987; Sedlacek, 1972, 1974, 1989; Tracey & Sedlacek, 1988, 1989; Van Arsdale, Sedlacek, & Brooks, 1971). Sedlacek and Brooks first introduced the study of noncognitive variables in the 1970s in an effort to identify the critical variables that contribute to the process of academic success in students of color (Sedlacek & Brooks, 1972, 1976). Their model emphasized that seven noncognitive variables (the Noncognitive Questionnaire; NCQ) significantly predicted African American student adjustment and success in institutions of higher education (Sedlacek, 1987). The seven noncognitive variables are: 1) positive self-concept or confidence, 2) realistic self-appraisal, 3) the ability to understand and deal with racism, 4) preference for long-range goals as opposed to short-term or immediate needs, 5) availability of strong support person, 6) successful leadership experience, and 7) involvement in community. Later, Tracey and Sedlacek (1984) expanded upon the work of Sedlacek and Brooks to produce an eighth variable (the Noncognitive Questionnaire-Revised; NCQ-R) that significantly predicted academic success in African American college students. Based on Tracey and Sedlacek’s revised model of noncognitive variables, the eight key variables are as follows: 1) positive self-concept or confidence, 2) realistic self-appraisal, 3) the ability to understand and deal with racism, 4) preference for long-range goals as opposed to short-term or immediate needs, 5)
availability of strong support person, 6) successful leadership experience, 7) involvement in community, and 8) nontraditional knowledge and academic interest (i.e., academic familiarity).

Positive self-concept or confidence pertains to an individual’s perception of his or her belongingness and identification within the institution of higher education. Research supports that having feelings of self-esteem or self-worth contribute to academic persistence (Goode & Watson, 1992). Having a positive self-concept is directly related to an individual’s racial identity development, as an individual’s stage of identity development will contribute to his or her level of confidence when navigating between his or her own culture and the existing culture of the university (Cross, 1991; Cross, Parham, & Helms, 1991; Helms, 1990; Sedlacek, 1987; Sedlacek & Brooks, 1976; Tracey & Sedlacek, 1984). Realistic self-appraisal is an individual’s ability to assess his or her progress, or lack of progress, within the institution of higher education both academically and socially. The ability to accurately assess one’s standing is essential for students of color, particularly as reinforcement from faculty and peers may be inconsistently given (Fleming, 1984; Nettles, Thoeny, & Gosman, 1986; Sedlacek & Brooks, 1976). This ability to accurately self-assess can lead students to development a greater responsibility for their academic outcomes (e.g., seeking tutoring) (Zimmerman, 1990). Understanding and dealing with racism characterizes an individual’s ability to know how racism works, recognize its occurrence, and effectively manage it with minimal interference on academic goal pursuit (Anderson, 1988; D’Augelli & Hershberger, 1993; Sedlacek, 1987). Community involvement is defined as an individual’s identification with and activity in a cultural community consistent with his or
her own cultural background. Consistent with communalistic values, this factor has been shown to be imperative in the academic success of African American students (Carson, 2009; Sedlacek, 1987; Young & Sowa, 1992). Long-range goals is an individual’s ability to set clear long-term objectives and delay instant gratification for the attainment of these long-term objectives. African American students who possess higher aspirations and clearer goals have been shown to do better academically than those who possess lower aspirations and vague goals (Astin, 1975; Perry, 1981; Sedlacek, 1987). Having a strong support person refers to establishing a relationship with an individual who can provide advice and guidance that pertain to personal well-being and the navigation of institutions of higher education (Allen, 1992; Sedlacek, 1987). This variable is relevant in the academic success for African American students, as these individuals can aid in buffering the effects of malintegrative experiences (Tinto, 1993). Successful leadership experience refers to traditional and nontraditional experiences through which an individual has shown the ability to organize and influence others. Examples of nontraditional leadership experiences include church involvement and community activities. These leadership experiences are important to recognize, as African American students are likely to demonstrate leadership on campus through nontraditional means, which are less likely to be validated by White faculty and students (Sedlacek, 1987). In addition to leadership experiences, nontraditional knowledge refers to an individual’s ability to develop ways of learning that are external to the institution of higher education. For example, in vivo learning experiences such as community debates and other external demonstrations of knowledge have been shown to significantly contribute to academic persistence in African American students (Sedlacek, 1987).
Testing the utility of noncognitive variables in the prediction of African American and White college students’ academic success, Tracy and Sedlacek (1987) conducted research with 1,683 incoming freshmen at a large PWI. The researchers had three research foci: 1) the consistency of the factor structure of the NCQ-R in African American and White samples, 2) the predictability of traditional standards of academic ability and the NCQ-R, 3) and the relationship between GPA and persistence. Academic success was observed through the manifest variables first-semester GPA, persistence after three semesters, and persistence after five semesters. Though the NCQ-R was administered to all incoming freshmen of one academic year, and a sample of incoming freshmen who attended summer orientation the following year, only participants for whom SAT scores and first-semester GPAs could be obtained from university records were included in this study. This resulted in the aforementioned total study population of 1,683 participants. About 12% (n = 208) of the resulting sample self-identified as African American and the remaining 1,475 participants self-identified as White.

The researchers used LISREL to analyze the factor structure of the NCQ across African American and White students. Additionally, they analyzed the structural models separately for African American and White students. Tracey and Sedlacek (1988) examined the seven-variable NCQ, as preliminary analyses resulted in the exclusion of the eighth variable of the NCQ-R. Preliminary analyses also confirmed the assumptions for the statistical tests. After fit indices were assessed, Pearson product correlations were examined to determine the presence of significant relationships. Statistical analyses yielded an overall model fit for the data. However, when tested separately, the NCQ fit better for African American students than it did for White students (African American
sample: maximum likelihood goodness of fit $= \chi^2(96, N=208) = 218.21, \ p<.001$; GFI = .90, $\chi^2/df = 2.3$ and all modification indices were less than 5.0. White sample $=\chi^2(96, \ N= 1475) = 531.86, \ p<.001$. The other goodness of fit indices were mixed with respect to the fit of the model GFI= .96, $\chi^2/df= 5.5$, and 12 of the parameter modification indices were above 5.0. Their research also supported that traditional indicators of academic success (i.e., SAT score) were predictive of first-semester GPA but not of persistence in African American students. Though only the strong support person dimension of the NCQ was predictive of first semester GPA, all the dimensions—with the exception of understanding and dealing with racism—were predictive of persistence beyond three semesters. Neither first-semester GPA nor SAT score was predictive of persistence to three semesters or to five semesters for African American students (Tracey and Sedlacek, 1987).

This research has significantly contributed to the scholarship of academic achievement in African American college populations. First, the identification that standard measures of academic ability (e.g., SAT, ACT) are not significant contributors of academic outcome variables like persistence is important. Standardized measures are commonly used as projective evaluations of students’ academic ability and were typically thought to indicate academic success for all students (Awad, 2007; Davis, 1994; Hood, 1992; Ramist, 1984). This identification allows institutions of higher education to recognize the unique factors that are relevant to African American student academic success, and to develop applicable initiatives in support of this success. Second, Sedlacek and his colleagues have provided a body of literature that offer empirical support to understanding the differences that underlie academically related variables in
students of color and those of the traditional academic structure. Though exceptional contributions to the existing literature, one major limitation of Tracy and Sedlacek’s study is the sample size of 208 African American participants when compared to 1,475 White students. A-priori power analyses with the desired power level were not reported in this study. Therefore, it is difficult to determine whether statistical conclusion validity was affected by the power of this study. The use of this comparative study design, especially with the disproportionate difference in participant group size, limits the potential to understand unique factors relevant within the African American student population. That said, the understanding of noncognitive variables and their contribution to academic outcomes led to the selection of the aforementioned grounding theoretical framework that includes a combination of intrapsychic and contextual variables (i.e., selecting a theory that attends to noncognitive variables) in its explanation of academic outcomes.

Dissertation Study

Purpose of the study. The existing research widely explores academically related outcomes among African American students in grade school (Cokley et al., 2003; Graham, 1994; Ogbu, 2003; Spencer, 1995; Steele, & Aronson, 1995, 1998; Tinto, 1993) and in all levels of education when compared to White students and other students of color (Guiffrida & Douthit, 2010; Harper & Tuckman, 2006; Ponterotto & Park-Taylor, 2007; Rowley et al., 1998; Sellers, Smith, et al., 1998; Vandiver et al., 2001). These studies, by design, employ a comparative or deficit perspective (i.e., the examination of how African American students deviate from White students). Resulting is a limitation within the literature, as studies that instead attend to the within-group aspects that relate
to African American students’ academic success are in short supply (Delgado, 1995; Kim & Conrad, 2006, Sedlacek, 1972; Sellers et al., 1997; Sellers, Smith, et al., 1998). The overemphasis on between-group differences present among academic research has led to an inattention to the resiliencies, protective factors, and unique aspects that may pertain particularly to African American students’ success. Moreover, an additional limitation exists as the literature that examines academic success among African American college students through the exploration of intrapsychic and environmental factors is represented far less in this body of research (Reid, 2013). The study of the confluence of these factors realistically reflect the daily experiences of African American college students and can potentially bolster the understanding of significant contributors to African American student success (Reid, 2013; Rodgers & Summers, 2008; Williamson, 2010).

The current study seeks to advance the existing literature by using positive psychological approaches to examine within-group differences of academic success among African American college students. Additionally, this study will address a limitation existing in the literature by assessing the predictive ability of racial identity on academic success with two leading racial identity measures. This “two-pronged” approach is implemented to 1) address the controversy surrounding racial identity in the literature, 2) assess which measure better predicts academic success, and 3) engage in a critical analysis of two leading measures to aid in understanding the relationship between the assumptions, stages, and identities that are specific to both theories and measures.

Based on the literature, I believe that African American college student academic success is multidimensional and encompasses students’ experiences and values intrapsychically, socially, and academically (Allen, 1992; Davis, 1994; Kraft, 1991;
Tinto, 1993; Tracey & Sedlacek, 1989). Included in this conceptualization are individuals’ abilities to negotiate an institutional system that may or may not be consistent with their values and norms, to realistically appraise their academic performance, and to be committed and determined to achieve their predetermined goals for higher education (Sedlacek, 1989, 2004; Tracey & Sedlacek, 1984, 1989); which is consistent with Tinto’s model (1993) that identifies similar factors. The proposed study will examine the ability of intrapsychic and contextual factors to predict academic success, as operationalized through the variables academic adjustment, social adjustment, and GPA among the African American college student population.

**Hypotheses.** Based on Tinto’s longitudinal model of institutional departure, I plan to run analyses that predict academic adjustment, social adjustment, and GPA through the measurement of the individual variables racial identity (i.e., subscales of the MIBI and CRIS), and goal commitment, and the contextual variable institutional climate (i.e., subscales of the CACQ). I hypothesize that racial identity, goal commitment, and institutional climate will predict academic success.

**Hypothesis 1.** A significant relationship will exist between racial identity subscales (centrality, ideology, regard and/or pre-encounter, immersion-emersion, internalization), goal commitment, institutional climate subscales (racial tension, cross cultural comfort, diversity awareness, residence hall tension, fair treatment, faculty racism, and overall satisfaction), and academic success (academic adjustment, social adjustment, and GPA).
1.a.: Predictor variables, racial identity subscales, goal commitment, and institutional climate subscales will demonstrate a significant relationship among themselves.

1.b.: A significant relationship will exist between racial identity subscales, goal commitment, institutional climate subscales, and academic adjustment.

1.c.: A significant relationship will exist between racial identity subscales, goal commitment, institutional climate subscales, and social adjustment.

1.d.: A significant relationship will exist between racial identity subscales, goal commitment, institutional climate subscales, and GPA.

**Hypothesis 2.** Racial identity subscales (centrality, ideology, regard and/or pre-encounter, immersion-emersion, internalization) will predict academic success (academic adjustment, social adjustment, and GPA). Because a composite score is not given for the racial identity measures, all of the racial identity subscales will be added to analyses to assess their separate predictive ability of academic adjustment, social adjustment, and GPA. Research has shown that specific racial identity subscales positively and negatively predict academic related outcomes. For example, the Internalization Multiculturalist Inclusive subscale of the CRIS has been shown to positively predict GPA and academic adjustment (Anglin & Wade, 2007; Elion, Wang, Stanley, & French, 2012; Hamilton, 2009) and the Pre-encounter Miseducation, Immersion-emersion anti-White, and Internalization Afrocentric subscales have been shown to negatively predict GPA, overall adjustment, study habits, and academic performance (Anglin & Wade, 2007; Campbell & Fleming, 2000; Cokely & Chapman, 2008; Elion et al., 2012) in college student populations. Though found to be a negative
predictor in the literature, Hamilton (2009) found the Immersion-emersion anti-White subscale to positively predict GPA. Regarding the MIBI, the Nationalist and Assimilation ideologies and Public Regard have been shown to negatively predict GPA in college students (Davis, 2009; Sellers, Chavous, et al., 1998), the Minority ideology has been shown to positively predict GPA (Sellers, Chavous, et al., 1998), and Private Regard has been shown to be the strongest predictor of performing well (Nasim, Roberts, Harrell, & Young, 2005). Though researchers have noted that the literature does not present an “overarching theory” of racial identity (Marks et al., 2004) or a “comprehensive, articulated model or theoretical framework that describes or explains the presumed causal influence” of racial identity and academic success (Cokley & Chapman, 2008, p. 354), based on the directionality identified among the aforementioned studies, specific directionality of predictions for those scales will be hypothesized.

2.a.: Racial identity subscales will predict academic adjustment.

2.a.1.: Specifically, the Internalization Multiculturalist Inclusive subscale of the CRIS will positively predict academic adjustment.

2.a.2.: Specifically, the Pre-encounter Miseducation subscale of the CRIS will negatively predict academic adjustment.

2.a.3.: Specifically, the Immersion-emersion anti-White subscale of the CRIS will negatively predict academic adjustment.

2.a.4.: Specifically, the Internalization Afrocentric subscales of the CRIS will negatively predict academic adjustment.

2.b.: Racial identity subscales will predict social adjustment.
2.b.1.: Specifically, the Internalization Multiculturalist Inclusive subscale of the CRIS will positively predict social adjustment.

2.b.2.: Specifically, the Pre-encounter Miseducation subscale of the CRIS will negatively predict social adjustment.

2.b.3.: Specifically, the Immersion-emersion anti-White subscale of the CRIS will negatively predict social adjustment.

2.b.4.: Specifically, the Internalization Afrocentric subscales of the CRIS will negatively predict social adjustment.

2.c.: Racial identity subscales will predict GPA.

2.c.1.: Specifically, the Internalization Multiculturalist Inclusive subscale of the CRIS will positively predict GPA.

2.c.2.: Specifically, the Pre-encounter Miseducation subscale of the CRIS will negatively predict GPA.

2.c.3.: Specifically, the Immersion-emersion anti-White subscale of the CRIS will negatively predict GPA.

2.c.4.: Specifically, the Internalization Afrocentric subscales of the CRIS will negatively predict GPA.

2.c.5.: Specifically, the Nationalist ideology subscale of the MIBI will negatively predict GPA.

2.c.6.: Specifically, the Assimilation ideology subscale of the MIBI will negatively predict GPA.

2.c.7.: Specifically, the Minority ideology subscale of the MIBI will positively predict GPA.
2.c.8.: Specifically, the Private Regard subscale of the MIBI will positively predict GPA.

2.c.9.: Specifically, the Public Regard subscale of the MIBI will negatively predict GPA.

*Hypothesis 3.* Goal commitment will predict academic success (academic adjustment, social adjustment, and GPA).

3.a.: Goal commitment will predict academic adjustment.

3.b.: Goal commitment will predict social adjustment.

3.c.: Goal commitment will predict GPA.

*Hypothesis 4.* Institutional climate subscales (racial tension, cross cultural comfort, diversity awareness, residence hall tension, fair treatment, faculty racism, and overall satisfaction) will predict academic success (academic adjustment, social adjustment, and GPA).

4.a.: Institutional climate subscales will predict academic adjustment.

4.b.: Institutional climate subscales will predict social adjustment.

4.c.: Institutional climate subscales will predict GPA.

*Hypothesis 5.* Racial identity subscales, goal commitment, and institutional climate subscales will predict academic success (academic adjustment, social adjustment, and GPA).

5.a.: Racial identity subscales, goal commitment, and institutional climate subscales will predict academic adjustment.

5.b.: Racial identity subscales, goal commitment, and institutional climate subscales will predict social adjustment.
5.c.: Racial identity subscales, goal commitment, and institutional climate sub-scales will predict GPA.

**Conceptual and operational definitions of variables**

**Racial identity.** Racial identity is a “multidimensional construct made up of components that incorporate a combination of ethnic awareness, sociopolitical attitudes, and cultural or in-group versus out-group preferences” (Chavous et al., 2003; p. 1078). In general, racial identity refers to the way an individual views oneself in relation to one’s racial group, perceives a shared racial heritage, and identifies the importance of race in one’s life (Cross, 1971, 1991; Helms, 1990; Rowley et al., 1998; Sellers, Smith, et al., 1998; Vandiver et al., 2001). Racial identity will be operationalized through the Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity (MIBI, Sellers et al., 1997) and the Cross Racial Identity Scale (CRIS, Vandiver et al., 2001).

**Goal commitment.** Goal commitment refers to an individual’s determination to reach a goal, the intention to extend effort toward goal attainment, persistence in pursuit of an identified goal, and unwillingness to lower or abandon an identified goal (Hollenbeck & Klein, 1987, Klein et al., 1999; Klein et al., 2001; Locke & Latham, 1990). Individuals’ intentions for attending college and their occupational aspirations will be assessed through open-ended questions in the demographic questionnaire. However, to avoid ascribing hierarchical value through the subjective interpretation of individuals’ specified goals and occupational aspirations, only goal commitment will be measured and included in statistical analyses. Goal commitment will be operationalized through the Hollenbeck, Williams, and Klein Goal Commitment Survey (HWK Scale, 1989).
**Institutional climate.** Institutional climate has been conceptualized as a “psychologically meaningful representation of the institution’s environment” (Chavous, 2005; p. 239), and refers to the extent of perceived comfort within the campus and the social support received or perceived to be available to students from their institutions of higher education (Davis, 1994; Edman & Brazil, 2009). Institutional climate will be operationalized through subscales of the Cultural Attitudes and Climate Questionnaire (CACQ, Helm et al., 1998).

**Academic success.** Academic success refers to an individual’s grade point average (GPA), academic adjustment, and social adjustment. GPA will be self-reported on a zero to four-point scale. Academic adjustment refers to the extent that formal and informal academic interactions contribute to individuals’ sense of fit with their institution of higher education. These interactions include academic performance and faculty and staff interactions (Tinto, 1993). Likewise, social adjustment refers to the extent that formal and informal social interactions contribute to individuals’ sense of institutional fit. These interactions include extracurricular activities and peer group interactions (Tinto, 1993). Academic and social adjustment will be measured through the academic adjustment and social adjustment subscales of the Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (SACQ; Baker & Siryk, 1989a).
Chapter Two: Method

Demographic Data

**Institutional demographics.** The nationwide inclusion of higher educational institutions may contribute to an increased manifestation of variance in academic success in this data. Educational policies, entry and exit requirements, and pedagogical practices vary in secondary and post-secondary education across states (Center on Education Policy, 2010; U.S. Department of Education). These differences can begin to be seen when reviewing the websites of states’ commissioning agencies and boards of higher education (U.S. Department of Education). Thus, it is necessary to control for the possibility of the manifestation of this variance. A closer evaluation of academic success was possible in this study through the limitation or elimination (i.e. control) of the influence of some variables while explaining the influence of others (Wiersma & Jurs, 2009). Hence, the influence of institution was controlled during data analyses. Data were collected from undergraduate freshmen participants attending four-year colleges and universities, in the nation. Both Historically Black Colleges and Universities and predominantly White institutions of higher education were included. Initially, data collection began within the state of Kentucky. However, due to low response rates, data collection parameters were expanded nationwide in order to reach the number of participants necessary to perform data analyses. Due to the national data collection parameters, it is not feasible to describe the institutional demographics of each institution from which a participant is enrolled.

**Participants.** To support the selection of racial identity as a representation of Tinto’s (1993) pre-entry attribute dimension in his longitudinal model of student
departure, freshman college students were sampled from colleges and universities across the nation. This includes both full-time and part-time enrolled students. Participants at least 18 years of age who self-identify as African American/Black or of African American/Black descent were eligible to participate in this study. The rationale for soliciting African American/Black undergraduate freshmen from multiple colleges and universities is to obtain a significant number of study participants and is based on the premise that previous literature on academic achievement has been conducted with undergraduate students, but have mostly been comparative in nature and have neglected to explore this phenomenon within the African American population. A-priori power analysis with an alpha level of .05, three control variables (gender, socioeconomic status/parental income, institution), 23 predictor variables (subscales of the aforementioned measures), and a power level of .8, yielded a minimum of 242 students needed to detect a small/medium effect size ($f^2 = .1$). Thus, 300 students were targeted for the study to account for attrition and incomplete surveys. Participants were from various socioeconomic and regional backgrounds, and academic areas of interest (i.e., majors). Specific demographic information will be reported in the Results section.

**Measures**

The constructs measured in this dissertation were goal commitment, racial identity, institutional climate, and academic success. The following section will provide a description of the outcome and predictor variables selected for this study and the instrumentation that was used to examine each variable. Additionally, the psychometric properties will be discussed for each instrument along with studies validating the use of these instruments in African American college populations.
**Demographic Questionnaire.** The demographic questionnaire elicited information pertaining to the participant’s age, gender, ethnicity, class rank, academic major, current course load (i.e., credit hours), grade point average (GPA), goals for attending college, annual income, and parent educational level (see Appendix A).

**Racial identity.** Racial identity was measured through the use of the Multidimensional Inventory of Black Identity (MIBI) and the Cross Racial Identity Scale (CRIS) (see Appendix A). The MIBI (Sellers et al., 1997) measures the three stable constructs of the Multidimensional Model of Racial Identity (MMRI, Sellers, Smith et al. 1998). These three constructs are centrality, ideology, and regard. Centrality refers to the extent to which a person “normatively defines herself or himself with regard to race” (i.e., whether race is a salient part of an individual’s identity and self-concept) (Sellers, Chavous, et al., 1998, p.12). Ideology refers to the “meaning that the individual ascribes to being Black” (i.e., general attributes, characteristics, and values the individual associates with African Americans) (Sellers, Chavous, et al., 1998, p.12). Regard refers to the personal perceptions individuals hold in relation to their racial group membership, and beliefs about how others view African Americans (Sellers, Chavous, et al., 1998).

The CRIS (Vandiver et al., 2001) measures the six identity clusters of Cross’ (1991) four stage revised and expanded theory of Nigrescence. These stages are Pre-Encounter, Encounter, Immersion-Emersion, and Internalization. The identity clusters associated with these stages are assimilation and anti-White identities (Pre-Encounter), intense Black involvement and anti-White identities (Immersion-Emersion), and Black nationalist/Afrocentricity and multiculturalist identities (Internalization). Pre-Encounter refers to a stage where individuals 1) endorse White cultural values and norms, 2) deny
the significance of race, 3) are often miseducated about race, and 4) may also possess a sense of self-hatred about being Black. Encounter refers to the reexamination of reference/social groups as individuals become aware of their racial miseducation through an exposure to gaps and conflicts in their identity. Immerison-Emersion refers to individuals’ desire to correct or compensate for their miseducation. Internalization refers to an adoption of the new identity that emerged from the previous stage (Cross, 1991, 1995; Vandiver et al., 2002; Vandiver, et al., 2001; Worrell et al., 2001).

The MIBI consists of 56 items with a 7-point Likert-type response scale where a response of “1” indicates “strongly disagree,” “4” indicates “neutral,” and “7” indicates “strongly agree.” The centrality subscale consists of 8 items, the regard subscale consists of 12 items (six items for private regard and six items for public regard), and the ideology subscale consists of 36 items (nine items for assimilation, nine items for humanist, nine items for oppressed minority, and nine items for nationalist). This measure is scored by summing the items of each subscale separately. A composite score for the scale is not given. High subscale scores on the centrality dimension indicate that race is a more central component in an individual’s identity development. A high private regard score is indicative of possessing more positive feelings regarding African Americans. A high public regard score indicates an individual’s perception that others have positive feelings toward African Americans. High assimilation subscale scores indicate that an individual endorses the assimilationist ideology. These individuals place an emphasis on the similarities between all Americans regardless of color, accentuate their American identity, and attempt to move into the mainstream culture as much as possible. Sellers and colleagues wrote that these individuals do not necessarily “imply a de-emphasis in
the importance of being African American, nor imply a lack of recognition of racism in America” but that assimilationist see that African Americans have a role in mainstream society (Sellers, Chavous, et al., 1998, p. 13). High humanist scores indicate an endorsement of the humanist ideology, which dismisses defining characteristics such as race, gender, and socioeconomic status and instead believes in the “human race” as the sole defining characteristic. Humanists look for similarities among all humans and are concerned with global issues that affect all human life such as environmental concerns and world peace. High scores on the oppressed minority subscale are indicative of an endorsement of the oppressed minority ideology and the emphasis on the similarities between African Americans and other marginalized groups with “acute awareness” of ongoing oppression and discrimination. Participants with high nationalist scores endorse the nationalist ideology and believe that African Americans should be in control of their own destiny and have little input from individuals outside of their cultural group.

National ideologists express the uniqueness of being Black and views the experiences of African Americans to be distinctly different from the experiences of other groups.

The CRIS consists of 40 items with a 7-point Likert-type response scale where a response of “1” indicates “strongly disagree,” “4” indicates “neutral,” and “7” indicates “strongly agree.” Each of the aforementioned identity clusters consist of five subscale items totaling 30 items. Additionally, the CRIS consists of ten “filler” items that are not associated with any of the identity cluster subscales. This measure is scored by summing the items of each subscale separately and using either the total subscale score or mean subscale score; an overall scale score is not given. Higher subscale scores on each subscale is indicative of a greater endorsement of that particular identity cluster.
The assimilation, self-hatred, and miseducation identity clusters fall under the Pre-Encounter stage. Higher scores on these identity subscales indicate that an individual endorsed a particular identity in the Pre-Encounter stage. Assimilation refers to individuals who endorse a pro-American reference group orientation and indicate that race is not salient to them (Vandiver et al., 2002). The self-hatred identity cluster is reflective of a negative personal view as a result of being Black. Miseducation refers to a general negative “stereotypical mindset” held by an individual about the Black community. The anti-White identity cluster falls under the Immersion-Emersion stage. This identity cluster reflects a rejection and “demonization” of everything White. Higher scores in this identity subscale would indicate that an individual endorses anti-White sentiment and is in the Immersion-Emersion stage. The multiculturalist inclusive and Afrocentricity identity clusters fall under the Internalization stage. The multiculturalist identity cluster is defined by an individual’s focus on two or more salient cultural identities and a desire to promote cultures beyond the Black race, whereas the Afrocentric identity is characterized by an individual’s desire to solely promote the Black community. Higher scores on this domain indicate that an individual endorses either of these identities and is at the final stage of identity development.

Past psychometric properties. The MIBI has been reported to show statistically acceptable levels of internal consistency. The Cronbach’s alphas for scores on the centrality domain have ranged from .70 to .79. The four subscales of the ideology domain have shown the following range of alpha coefficients: nationalist, alpha = .69 to .80; oppressed minority, alpha = .75 to .77; assimilationist, alpha = .53 to .74; and humanist, alpha = .67 to .69 among samples of African American college students. The
regard domain has shown alphas at a range of .55 to .78, and .73 to .78 for private regard and public regard, respectively, among African American college students (Ponterotto & Park-Taylor, 2007; Sellers et al., 1997; Sellers, Chavous, et al., 1998; Sellers & Shelton, 2003; Sellers, Smith, et al., 1998; Vandiver, Worrell, & Delgado-Romero, 2009). The CRIS has been reported to show statistically acceptable levels of internal consistency, with Cronbach’s alphas for subscale scores ranging from .76 to .89 among African American college students (Vandiver et al., 2002).

Validation studies. The validity and reliability of the MIBI have been well established among African American college students (Ponterotto & Park-Taylor, 2007; Sellers et al., 1997; Sellers, Chavous, et al., 1998; Sellers & Shelton, 2003; Sellers, Smith, et al., 1998), as have validity and reliability been established for the CRIS (Vandiver et al., 2002; Vandiver et al., 2001; Worrell et al., 2001).

Psychometric properties for this dissertation study. The Cronbach’s alphas for scores on the MIBI ranged from .65 to .84. Centrality had an internal consistency of .71, private regard had an internal consistency of .84, public regard had an internal consistency of .82, assimilation had an internal consistency of .71, humanist had an internal consistency of .79, minority had an internal consistency of .70, and the nationalist subscale had an internal consistency of .65. Cronbach’s alphas for scores on the CRIS scale were also good, ranging from .80 to .92. The specific subscale internal consistencies are as follows: pre-encounter assimilation was .83, pre-encounter miseducation was .80, pre-encounter self-hate was .89, immersion-emersion anti-White attitudes was .92, internalization multiculturalist inclusive was .81, and internalization Afrocentricity was .85.
Goal commitment. Goal commitment was assessed through quantitative measures (see Appendix A). In the demographic questionnaire, participants were asked to identify their primary and secondary goals/reasons for attending college. Additionally, participants reported their desired occupation. To assess participants’ commitment to their goals, Hollenbeck, Williams and Klein’s goal commitment scale was used (Hollenbeck, Williams & Klein, 1989). The HWK scale consists of nine items that assess an individual’s commitment to an identified goal (e.g., the goals a participant identifies in the demographic questionnaire). Respondents indicate their level of agreement with each item on a 5-point Likert scale with “1” indicating “strongly disagree” and “5” indicating “strongly agree.” Responses are summed and higher scores are indicative of high goal commitment.

Past psychometric properties. Statistically significant internal consistencies have been reported for HWK Scale. Cronbach’s alphas range from .70 to .88 (Hollenbeck, Williams & Klein, 1989; Klein & Kim, 1998; Klein et al., 1999).

Validation studies. The HWK Scale is the most commonly used measure of goal commitment (Klein et al., 2001). Validation studies show the validity and reliability of the HWK to be well established among a number of samples, including students and employees in experimental and correlational research design studies (DeShon & Landis, 1997; Klein & Kim, 1998; Wright & Kacmar, 1994, 1995). Though this measure has been used commonly among college students, its utility among student populations of color, particularly African American college students, is less frequent. This instrument has not been used to assess goal commitment in African American college students;
therefore, a preliminary examination of the psychometric properties was examined through an examination of the alpha coefficients and exploratory factor analysis.

**Psychometric properties for this dissertation study.** The internal consistency of the HWK scale in this study was acceptable, with a Cronbach’s alpha of .76.

**Institutional climate.** The Cultural Attitudes and Climate Questionnaire (CACQ; Helm et al., 1998) was used to measure institutional climate (see Appendix A). The CACQ measures eleven factors identified from the original 100-item measure that relate to an individual’s perception of the campus racial climate. Also referred to as the Campus Climate Survey (Carter, 2006; Fukuda, 2009), the CACQ consists of 45 items that assess the following factors: racial tension, cross-cultural comfort, diversity awareness, racial pressures, residence hall tension, fair treatment, faculty racism, respect for other cultures, lack of support, comfort with own culture, and overall satisfaction.

Racial tension assesses an individual’s perception and experience of racial conflict on campus. Cross-cultural comfort assesses an individual’s comfort with racially or ethnically similar and different faculty and peers. Diversity awareness assesses an individual’s sensitivity to racial and ethnic differences. Racial pressure assesses the pressure to conform to racial and/or ethnic stereotypes felt by an individual. Residence hall tension is an individual’s perception of interracial and interethnic conflict in residence halls. Fair treatment is an individual’s perception of receiving fair treatment by faculty, peers, and teaching assistants. Faculty racism is an individual’s perception and experience of a racist atmosphere perpetuated by faculty. Respect for other cultures assesses an individual’s perception of faculty and student respect for different racial and ethnic groups. Lack of support is the experience of help and support from faculty,
students, and teaching assistants perceived by an individual. Comfort with own culture assesses individuals’ comfort with their background. Overall satisfaction refers to an individual’s perception of the campus environment as academically and socially rewarding (Ancis et al., 2000).

Participants indicate their agreement with the aforementioned items by responding to a 5-point Likert type scale, where “1” indicates “strongly disagree” and “5” indicates “strongly agree.” A “not applicable” (NA) category is also included in this Likert scale for items that may not be relevant to participants (e.g., residence hall tension items may be marked as “NA” for participants who have never lived in a residence hall). Responses on factor scales are summed to assess an individual’s perception of campus racial tension and lack of support, such that higher levels of racial tension and lack of support are indicative of lower levels of institutional satisfaction (Helm et al., 1998).

**Past psychometric properties.** With an overall Cronbach’s alpha of .81, the following alpha coefficients have been reported for the CACQ dimensions among samples of African American and Latino college students: racial tension, alpha = .76 and .73; cross-cultural comfort, alpha = .75 and .73; diversity awareness, alpha = .69, .67 and .61; racial pressures, alpha = .65 and .60; residence hall tension, alpha = .69; fair treatment, alpha = .75, and .74; faculty racism, alpha = .77; respect for other cultures, alpha = .62; lack of support, alpha = .63; comfort with own culture, alpha = .54 and .55; and overall satisfaction, alpha = .78 (Ancis et al., 2000; Carter, 2006; Helm et al., 1998). Some subscales may be omitted from the survey protocol, as their estimates of internal consistency reliability are low.
Validation studies. The validity and reliability of the CACQ have been established among many samples of diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds. Examples of these samples include university and community college students of African American, Asian, Latino, Native American, and White backgrounds (Ancis et al., 2000; Carter, 2006; Fukuda, 2009; Helm et al., 1998).

Psychometric properties for this dissertation study. The internal consistencies for the CACQ subscales ranged from .61 to .94. Specific Cronbach’s alphas are as follows: racial tension was .92, cross cultural comfort was .87, diversity awareness was .71, racial pressure was .74, residence hall tension was .61, fair treatment was .87, faculty racism was .94, respect for other cultures was .79, lack of support was .89, comfort with own culture was .73, and overall satisfaction was .91.

Academic success. Academic success was examined through three variables: academic adjustment, social adjustment, and GPA. Participants’ grade point averages were self-reported. Academic adjustment and social adjustment were measured through the use of the Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (SACQ; Baker & Siryk, 1989a, 1989b). The SACQ measures the effectiveness of student adjustment to college among four domains. This self-reported 67-item questionnaire assesses the domains of academic adjustment, social adjustment, personal-emotional adjustment, and attachment. Particularly, the academic adjustment and social adjustment subscales were used as manifest variables to assess an individual’s academic success within the institution of higher education. The academic adjustment subscale measures an individual’s success at navigating the demands of the institution of higher education. The social adjustment subscale assesses an individual’s ability to navigate interpersonal and social demands of
the institution. The personal-emotional adjustment subscale assesses an individual’s psychological and physical feelings. The attachment subscale measures an individual’s general satisfaction with college experiences and particular satisfaction with the institution of higher education. Respondents indicate the applicability of each item on a 9-point scale with the anchors “applies very closely to me” and “doesn’t apply to me at all” which correspond with “1” and “9” respectively.

**Past psychometric properties.** Previous research reports Cronbach’s alphas ranging from .86 to .93 among samples of college participants. The following alpha coefficient ranges have been reported for the SACQ subscales: academic adjustment, alpha = .81 to .90, social adjustment, alpha = .83 to .91 (Abe, Talbot & Geelhoed, 1998; Baker & Siryk, 1984, 1989; Hurtado, Carter, & Spuler, 1996; Zea, Jarama, & Bianchi, 1995).

**Validation studies.** Grade point average is a widely used indicator variable of academic success (Allen, 1992; Awad, 2007; Davis, 1994; Fleming, 1984; Palmer & Young, 2008). The use of GPA and other standardized measures as indicators of academic success is heavily debated, as some researchers argue that standardized measures are culturally biased, and that these indicators do not accurately reflect an individual’s ability, particularly among marginalized populations (Bridgeman & Wendler, 1991; Farver, Sedlacek, & Brooks, 1975; Sedlacek, 2004). Used less often as an indicator of academic success, Jenkins et al. (2004) measured academic success by the number of consecutive semesters a student remained enrolled in college from the first semester of initial entry. The validity and reliability of the SACQ have been established among many samples of diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds. Examples of these
samples include university college student of African American, Asian, Latino, White and international backgrounds (Abe et al., 1998; Hurtado et al., 1996; Zea et al., 1995; Zea, Reisen, Beil, & Caplan, 1997).

**Psychometric properties for this dissertation study.** The SACQ showed excellent internal consistency for this study with academic adjustment having a Cronbach’s alpha of .91 and social adjustment having a Cronbach’s alpha of .92.

**Recruitment Procedures and Data Collection**

The primary investigator (principal examiner) recruited participants through email solicitations. Participation in this study consisted of completing a battery of self-reported measures through Qualtrics, an online data collection tool. The primary investigator e-mailed department chairs, class instructors who taught courses in which African American students were likely to enroll (e.g., African American Studies, African American History), and presidents of campus registered student organizations who were likely to serve African American students (e.g., Black Student Union, Martin Luther King, Jr. Cultural Center Emissaries) to request permission to solicit study participants through their list serves. This e-mail included a standardized solicitation request, a standardized script explaining the purposes of the study, any associated risks and benefits, the voluntary nature of participation, eligibility requirements, incentives for participation (see Appendix A), and a link to the location of the survey. As an incentive for participation, participants who completed the survey protocol were given the opportunity to enter in a random drawing to win one of twenty $20 Wal-Mart gift cards. The online survey protocol completion process took approximately thirty minutes. If
students chose to participate in the study, their completion of the online survey protocol served as consent. The information collected was treated confidentially.
Chapter Three: Results

Preliminary Checks

Sample Characteristics. Three hundred and forty respondents were recorded in the Qualtrics database as having selected the survey link as potential study participants. Of this total, 275 respondents chose to proceed beyond the informed consent page in order to participate in this study. After the exclusion of respondents who solely completed demographic data (i.e., did not complete any of the survey scales), the number of participants was reduced to 269. Data screening/cleaning procedures (described in the section below) were performed on these participants, which resulted in a total of 240 participants remaining for data analyses.

The sample consisted of 240 participants ages 18 to 53, \( M = 21.49; SD = 6.23; \) and mode = 18), who self-identified as Black/African American college freshmen. Participants were enrolled at higher educational institutions nationwide. Thirty-two participants (13.3%) were enrolled at the University of Kentucky, 14 participants (5.8%) were enrolled at the University of Akron, 11 participants (4.6%) were enrolled at Northeastern University, 10 participants (4.2%) were enrolled at the University of Louisville and Kentucky State University each, seven participants (2.9%) were enrolled at Eastern Kentucky University, Virginia Tech, and Berea College each, five participants (2.1%) were enrolled at Morehead State University, and four participants (1.7%) were enrolled at the University of West Georgia. The remaining 133 participants (55.4%) were enrolled at institutions across the nation in which they were the sole respondent from that institution or had no more than two other institutional colleagues who participated in this study. Grade point averages ranged from 1.2 to 4.0, with most
participants reporting a GPA of 3.0 ($M = 3.264, SD = .54$). The parental education level of participants ranged from less than a high school diploma to doctoral degrees for both mothers and fathers. The majority of participants’ mothers had both high school diplomas/equivalencies and bachelor’s degrees at 21.3% each ($n = 51$). Twenty percent ($n = 48$) had at least some college experience. Participants’ fathers mostly had high school diplomas or equivalencies at 30.4 % ($n = 73$) and only 13.3% ($n = 32$) had bachelor’s degrees. However, 17.5 % ($n = 42$) of fathers had at least some college experience. The majority of participants (78%, $n = 188$) reported their annual income as $10,000 or less. The distribution of parental annual income is as follows: 35% ($n = 84$) at $50,001 and more, 15.4% ($n = 37$) at $40,001-50,000, 14.2% ($n = 34$) at $30,001-$40,000, 11.3% ($n = 27$) at $20,001-30,000 and $10,001-20,000 each, and 10.8% ($n = 26$) at $10,000 or less. Gender was not distributed equally in this sample, as 158 participants (65.8%) were female, 78 participants (32.5%) were male and four participants (1.7%) preferred not to indicate gender. Though unequally distributed, the percentages of males and females in this study were consistent with the research that reports female students entering and completing college at higher rates than males (Ross et al., 2012).

**Assumptions.** The data were checked for univariate outliers, multivariate outliers, normality, and linearity. To check for univariate outliers, scores were transformed into $z$ scores and examined for values that exceed 3.39 ($p < .001$) (Stevens, 1992). Mahalanobis Distance was calculated to assess for multivariate outliers and leverage and discrepancy was examined to determine whether any highly influence outliers existed. Twenty-nine cases were omitted due to their emergence as outliers.
The assumption of normality for scale scores was assessed by visual inspection of scale histograms and the examination of skewness and kurtosis scores. Statistical significance at a .01 level (z-score equating to ± 2.58) was determined by dividing the skewness and kurtosis values by their values of standard errors. As shown in Table 1, eight scales were not normally distributed (i.e., positively and negatively skewed) and were transformed using square root (Pre-encounter Self Hate, Racial Tension, and Lack of Support), logarithmic (GPA, HWK, Private Regard, and Faculty Racism) and inverse-reciprocal transformations (Immersion Emersion Anti-White). All scales had acceptable to excellent levels of internal consistency as determined by Cronbach’s alpha values ranging from .65 to .94. Table 1 displays the means, standard deviations, skewness, internal consistency, and sample sizes for each scale.
Table 1.  
*Descriptive Statistics on Continuous Independent and Dependent Variables*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Skew-Before Transformation</th>
<th>Skew</th>
<th>α</th>
<th>n</th>
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</thead>
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<td>-5.220</td>
<td>.930</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>214</td>
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<td>-5.898</td>
<td>2.203</td>
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<td>-1.40</td>
<td>.714</td>
<td>166</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>1.025</td>
<td>-4.290</td>
<td>1.170</td>
<td>.842</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PublicRegard</td>
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<td>1.132</td>
<td>-1.70</td>
<td>.822</td>
<td>164</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Assimilation</td>
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<td>-1.460</td>
<td>.792</td>
<td>164</td>
<td></td>
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<td>1.032</td>
<td>-1.460</td>
<td>.792</td>
<td>165</td>
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<td>1.540</td>
<td>.701</td>
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<td>CRISPreMsed</td>
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<td>-0.900</td>
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<td>CRISIMCI</td>
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<td>-2.07</td>
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<td>RacialTension</td>
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<td>.918</td>
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<td>-1.620</td>
<td>.869</td>
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<tr>
<td>DiversAware</td>
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<td>.772</td>
<td>.980</td>
<td>.705</td>
<td>174</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>.741</td>
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<td>.908</td>
<td>1.150</td>
<td>.607</td>
<td>170</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FairTreat</td>
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<td>.907</td>
<td>-1.440</td>
<td>.874</td>
<td>170</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FacultyRac</td>
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<td>1.540</td>
<td>5.290</td>
<td>2.090</td>
<td>.938</td>
<td>174</td>
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<td>-.510</td>
<td>.789</td>
<td>177</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>1.353</td>
<td>4.800</td>
<td>2.320</td>
<td>.889</td>
<td>178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ComfOwnCltr</td>
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<td>.961</td>
<td>-2.260</td>
<td>.734</td>
<td>180</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OveraSatis</td>
<td>4.310</td>
<td>.949</td>
<td>-1.440</td>
<td>.914</td>
<td>175</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AcadAdj</td>
<td>3.390</td>
<td>1.320</td>
<td>.780</td>
<td>.911</td>
<td>173</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SocAdj</td>
<td>3.170</td>
<td>1.434</td>
<td>-1.160</td>
<td>.924</td>
<td>137</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Statistical controls. A number of confounding variables have been discussed in the literature pertaining to academic success. Most commonly, race, gender, and socioeconomic status have been identified as contributing to the difference in academically related outcomes within African American student populations. The literature reports that African American females achieve academically at higher rates than African American males (American Council on Education, 2006; Delgado, 1995; Ford, 1996; Ross et al., 2012; U.S. Department of Education, 2009). Where African American men’s college graduation rate increased from 28% to 36% between the years of 1990 and 2006, African American women’s college graduation rate increased from 34% to 47% (U.S. Department of Education, 2009). Additionally, the research shows that African American females are more academically successful in high school and graduate at higher rates, and enter college and have higher college GPAs than African American males (Allen, 1992; Aronson, Fried, & Good; 2001; Bowman & Howard, 1985; Steele, 1997). For this reason, gender was a controlled variable in statistical analyses. Regarding financial status, the literature also shows that students of higher socioeconomic statuses perform better academically than students of lower socioeconomic status (Sewell & Shah, 1967; U.S. Department of Education, 2009; White, 1987). Thus, parental annual income was also controlled. Additionally, age and institution were controlled to address other possible causes for differences in data. To examine their consistency with the existing literature, and to control for extraneous variance, the aforementioned confounds were entered into block 1 of each regression (that will be discussed with the following hypotheses). Race was not controlled, as all
participants in this study self-identified as African American/Black or were of African American/Black descent.

**Analyses**

**Preliminary Analysis.** Bi-variate correlations were conducted on all variables in the model to ensure they were appropriately related to one another, as determined by the significance of the variables.

**Hypothesis 1.** The first hypothesis for this study is that a significant relationship will exist between racial identity subscales (centrality, ideology, regard and/or pre-encounter, immersion-emersion, internalization), goal commitment, institutional climate subscales (racial tension, cross cultural comfort, diversity awareness, residence hall tension, fair treatment, faculty racism, and overall satisfaction), and academic success (academic adjustment, social adjustment, and GPA).

1.a.: Predictor variables, racial identity subscales, goal commitment, and institutional climate subscales will demonstrate a significant relationship among themselves.

1.b.: A significant relationship will exist between racial identity subscales, goal commitment, institutional climate subscales, and academic adjustment.

1.c.: A significant relationship will exist between racial identity subscales, goal commitment, institutional climate subscales, and social adjustment.

1.d.: A significant relationship will exist between racial identity subscales, goal commitment, institutional climate subscales, and GPA.

Pearson’s correlation matrix was assessed for the significance of relationships between variables. Correlation coefficients range from -1 to 1 where a score of either -1
or 1 is indicative of a perfect correlation or relationship. A coefficient of 0 is indicative of no correlation or relationship. Positive coefficients are indicative of a direct relationship where one variable increases as another variable increases. Negative coefficients are indicative of an inverse relationship, where one variable increases as the other variable decreases. Correlation coefficients were assessed for multicollinearity to determine whether exceedingly high correlations existed among variables (i.e., correlation coefficients above .70 and that are significantly high in comparison to other coefficients in the matrix). Bivariate correlations determined that four variables of the CACQ had high correlations but were deemed acceptable. There were strong positive correlations between Respect for Other Cultures and Overall Satisfaction ($r = .70$) and Faculty Racism and Lack of Support ($r = .71$). Bivariate correlations also determined that the predictor variables were significantly correlated with the outcome variables. Thirty (.06%) correlation coefficients emerged as weak. Hypotheses 1.a -1.d were fully confirmed; the strength and directionality of their relationships can be seen in Table 2.
Table 2.  
*Correlations between Continuous Independent and Dependent Variables*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
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<th>10</th>
<th>11</th>
<th>12</th>
<th>13</th>
<th>14</th>
<th>15</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. GPA</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.131</td>
<td>-.167*</td>
<td>.206**</td>
<td>-.044</td>
<td>.038</td>
<td>-.080</td>
<td>-.013</td>
<td>-.066</td>
<td>-.149</td>
<td>.079</td>
<td>.101</td>
<td>.017</td>
<td>-.085</td>
<td>-.033</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Self Income</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>-.058</td>
<td>.017</td>
<td>-.051</td>
<td>-.054</td>
<td>-.196*</td>
<td>.134</td>
<td>.180*</td>
<td>-.022</td>
<td>-.008</td>
<td>.062</td>
<td>-.031</td>
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<td>-.001</td>
<td>-.050</td>
<td>.005</td>
<td>.039</td>
<td>.089</td>
<td>.024</td>
<td>-.113</td>
<td>.010</td>
<td>.096</td>
<td>-.052</td>
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<td>4. HWK</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-.114</td>
<td>.304**</td>
<td>-.007</td>
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<td>-.251**</td>
<td>-.126</td>
<td>.120</td>
<td>-.002</td>
<td>.117</td>
<td>.346**</td>
<td>-.310**</td>
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<td>5. Centrality</td>
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<td>-.331**</td>
<td>.063</td>
<td>-.092</td>
<td>.227**</td>
<td>.401**</td>
<td>-.549**</td>
<td>-.153</td>
<td>-.129</td>
<td>-.024</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Private Regard</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-.052</td>
<td>-.523**</td>
<td>-.476**</td>
<td>-.289**</td>
<td>.124</td>
<td>.186*</td>
<td>.213**</td>
<td>.538**</td>
<td>-.355**</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Public Regard</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-.039</td>
<td>.219**</td>
<td>-.222**</td>
<td>-.361**</td>
<td>.409**</td>
<td>.148</td>
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<td>8. Assimilation</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.599**</td>
<td>.558**</td>
<td>-.253**</td>
<td>.183*</td>
<td>.191*</td>
<td>-.120</td>
<td>.272**</td>
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<td>-.373**</td>
<td>.265**</td>
<td>.185*</td>
<td>-.248**</td>
<td>.417**</td>
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<td>.069</td>
<td>.038</td>
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<td>11. Nationalist</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-.443</td>
<td>-.058</td>
<td>.154</td>
<td>-.380**</td>
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<td>-.058</td>
<td>.154</td>
<td>-.380**</td>
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<td>15. CRISIEAW</td>
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<td>-</td>
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*p < .05, **p < .01
**Hypothesis 2.** Racial identity subscales (centrality, ideology, regard and/or pre-encounter, immersion-emersion, internalization) will predict academic success (academic adjustment, social adjustment, and GPA).

2.a.: Racial identity subscales will predict academic adjustment.

   2.a.1.: Specifically, the Internalization Multiculturalist Inclusive subscale of the CRIS will positively predict academic adjustment.

   2.a.2.: Specifically, the Pre-encounter Miseducation subscale of the CRIS will negatively predict academic adjustment.

   2.a.3.: Specifically, the Immersion-emersion anti-White subscale of the CRIS will negatively predict academic adjustment.

   2.a.4.: Specifically, the Internalization Afrocentric subscales of the CRIS will negatively predict academic adjustment.

2.b.: Racial identity subscales will predict social adjustment.

   2.b.1.: Specifically, the Internalization Multiculturalist Inclusive subscale of the CRIS will positively predict social adjustment.

   2.b.2.: Specifically, the Pre-encounter Miseducation subscale of the CRIS will negatively predict social adjustment.

   2.b.3.: Specifically, the Immersion-emersion anti-White subscale of the CRIS will negatively predict social adjustment.

   2.b.4.: Specifically, the Internalization Afrocentric subscales of the CRIS will negatively predict social adjustment.

2.c.: Racial identity subscales will predict GPA.
2.c.1.: Specifically, the Internalization Multiculturalist Inclusive subscale of the CRIS will positively predict GPA.

2.c.2.: Specifically, the Pre-encounter Miseducation subscale of the CRIS will negatively predict GPA.

2.c.3.: Specifically, the Immersion-emersion anti-White subscale of the CRIS will negatively predict GPA.

2.c.4.: Specifically, the Internalization Afrocentric subscales of the CRIS will negatively predict GPA.

2.c.5.: Specifically, the Nationalist ideology subscale of the MIBI will negatively predict GPA.

2.c.6.: Specifically, the Assimilation ideology subscale of the MIBI will negatively predict GPA.

2.c.7.: Specifically, the Minority ideology subscale of the MIBI will positively predict GPA.

2.c.8.: Specifically, the Private Regard subscale of the MIBI will positively predict GPA.

2.c.9.: Specifically, the Public Regard subscale of the MIBI will negatively predict GPA.

To assess the assumed linear relationship between racial identity and academic success, multiple hierarchical regressions with each variable of academic success as separate dependent variables were run (Cohen, Cohen, West, & Akin, 2003). First, academic adjustment was entered in the main dialog box as the dependent variable. Second, potential confounds (i.e., gender, parental annual income, age, and institution)
were entered into block 1 of SPSS using the enter method in order to control for their contribution to the variance explained between predictor variables and academic adjustment. Third, racial identity variables were entered into block 2 of SPSS as the independent variable using the enter method. Finally, the analysis was run. The aforementioned procedure was followed with social adjustment and GPA entered in the main dialog box as dependent variables to test hypotheses 2.b. and 2.c., respectively. The $F$-statistic was examined for statistical significance of the regression equation as a whole to assess whether the independent variables together predicted the dependent variable.

Upon determining significance of the regression equation, beta coefficients were assessed and interpreted to determine how strongly unique responses of racial identity (centrality, ideology, regard and pre-encounter, immersion-emersion, internalization) predicted academic adjustment, social adjustment, and GPA.

**Academic adjustment.** Hierarchical regression results (Table 3) tested a full model of 17 predictors (control variables and the subscales of the MIBI and CRIS) that significantly predicted academic adjustment, $R^2 = .227$, $[F(17,119) = 2.057, p < .05]$; *Adjusted $R^2 = .176]*. This model accounted for approximately 23% of the variance in academic adjustment among African American college freshmen. No variables emerged independently as significant predictors after controlling for all variables included in this regression.

Hierarchical regression results (Table 4) tested a full model of 11 predictors (control variables and the MIBI subscales) that significantly predicted academic adjustment, $R^2 = .166$, $[F(11,125) = 2.267, p < .05]$; *Adjusted $R^2 = .093]*. This model accounted for approximately 17% of variance in academic adjustment among African American college freshmen.
American college freshmen. After controlling for all other variables, private regard ($\beta = .392, p = .001$) and the control variable gender ($\beta = -.192, p = .028$) were unique significant predictors of academic adjustment. A higher private regard score is indicative of possessing more positive feelings regarding African Americans. Participants who reported more positive feelings regarding African Americans reported being more adjusted academically. Female students reported being less adjusted academically.

Hierarchical regression results (Table 5) tested a full model of 10 predictors (control variables and CRIS subscales) that significantly predicted academic adjustment, $R^2 = .181, [F(10,127) = 2.814, p < .01]; \text{Adjusted } R^2 = .117$. This model accounted for approximately 18% of variance in academic adjustment among African American college freshmen. No variables emerged independently as significant predictors after controlling for all variables included in this regression.
Table 3.

*Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analyses Predicting Academic Adjustment from MIBI and CRIS*

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\[ R^2 \]
\[ .051 \quad .227 \]
\[ F \]
\[ 1.788 \quad 2.057^* \]
\[ \Delta R^2 \]
\[ .051 \quad .176 \]
\[ \Delta F \]
\[ 1.788 \quad 2.082^* \]

*Note. N = 137. *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001*

β indicates standardized regression coefficient
Table 4.

*Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analyses Predicting Academic Adjustment from MIBI*

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\[
R^2 \quad 0.051 \quad 0.166
\]

\[
F \quad 1.788 \quad 2.267^*\]

\[
\Delta R^2 \quad 0.051 \quad 0.115
\]

\[
\Delta F \quad 1.788 \quad 2.462^*
\]

*Note. N = 137. *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001
β indicates standardized regression coefficient*
Table 5.

*Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analyses Predicting Academic Adjustment from CRIS*

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<td></td>
<td>-.068</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[
R^2 \\
F \\
\Delta R^2 \\
\Delta F
\]

\[
.051 \\
1.801 \\
.051 \\
1.801
\]

\[
.181 \\
2.814** \\
.130 \\
3.361**
\]

*Note. N = 138. *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001*

β indicates standardized regression coefficient
Social adjustment. Hierarchical regression results (Table 6) tested a full model of 17 predictors (control variables, MIBI subscales, and CRIS subscales) that significantly predicted social adjustment, $R^2 = .375$, $[F(17,94) = 3.321, p < .001]$; Adjusted $R^2 = .316$. This model accounted for approximately 38% of variance in social adjustment among African American college freshmen. Private regard ($\beta = .295$, $p = .042$) and public regard ($\beta = -.220$, $p = .042$) emerged as significant predictors of social adjustment after controlling for all other variables included in this regression. Where a higher private regard is indicative of an individual’s own possession of positive feelings regarding African Americans, a higher public regard score indicates an individual’s perception that others have positive feelings toward African Americans. Participants who reported more personal positive feelings regarding African Americans were more socially adjusted. Conversely, participants with higher public regard scores reported less adjustment socially.

Hierarchical regression results (Table 7) tested a full model of 11 predictors (control variables and MIBI subscales) that significantly predicted social adjustment, $R^2 = .331$, $[F(11,100) = 4.496, p < .001]$; Adjusted $R^2 = .257$. This model accounted for approximately 33% of variance in social adjustment among African American college freshmen. After controlling for all other variables included in this regression, three variables emerged as significant predictors of social adjustment: private regard ($\beta = .395$, $p = .001$), public regard ($\beta = -.261$, $p = .009$), and the minority ideology ($\beta = -.220$, $p = .044$). Descriptions of the private regard and public regard were provided in the aforementioned regression. The minority (oppressed minority) ideology emphasizes the similarities between African Americans and other marginalized groups with “acute
awareness” of ongoing oppression and discrimination. Participants who endorsed higher private regard scores reported that they were more socially adjusted. However, public regard and the minority ideology were negative predictors such that participants who endorsed that others hold positive beliefs regarding African Americans and those who emphasized the similarities between marginalized groups and are perceptive of ongoing oppression were less adjusted socially.

Hierarchical regression results (Table 8) tested a full model of 10 predictors (control variables and CRIS subscales) that significantly predicted social adjustment, $R^2 = .261$, [$F(10,106) = 3.751, p < .001]$; Adjusted $R^2 = .192$. This model accounted for approximately 26% of variance in social adjustment among African American college freshmen. After controlling for all other included variables, multiculturalist inclusive (of the internalization stage) was a significant predictor of social adjustment ($\beta = -.214, p = .031$). The multiculturalist identity cluster is defined by an individual’s focus on two or more salient cultural identities and a desire to promote cultures beyond the Black race (Vandiver et al., 2001). Higher scores on this variable indicate that an individual is in the final stage of identity development. Participants who reported higher multiculturalist inclusive scores reported being less adjusted socially.
Table 6.

*Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analyses Predicting Social Adjustment From MIBI and CRIS*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>β Step 1</th>
<th>β Step 2</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>.049</td>
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<td>.157</td>
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<tr>
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<td>-.017</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Regard</td>
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<td>.295*</td>
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<tr>
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<td>-.220*</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Pre-encounter Miseducation</td>
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<td>Pre-encounter Self Hate</td>
<td></td>
<td>.067</td>
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<td>Immersion-Emersion Anti White</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internalization Afrocentricity</td>
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<td>-.157</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ R^2 \]  
\[ F \]  1.673  3.321**  
\[ \Delta R^2 \]  .059  .316  
\[ \Delta F \]  1.673  3.662**

*Note.* \( N = 112. *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001 \)  
\( \beta \) indicates standardized regression coefficient
Table 7.

*Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analyses Predicting Social Adjustment from MIBI*

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<td>.058</td>
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<tr>
<td>Age</td>
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<td>.174</td>
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<td>-.025</td>
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<tr>
<td>Private Regard</td>
<td></td>
<td>.395**</td>
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<tr>
<td>Public Regard</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.261**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assimilation</td>
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<td>.140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humanist</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Nationalist</td>
<td></td>
<td>.117</td>
</tr>
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</table>

\[
R^2 \quad .059 \quad .331
\]

\[
F \quad 1.673 \quad 4.496^{***}
\]

\[
\Delta R^2 \quad .059 \quad .272
\]

\[
\Delta F \quad 1.673 \quad 5.808^{***}
\]

*Note. N = 112. *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001

β indicates standardized regression coefficient*
Table 8.  
*Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analyses Predicting Social Adjustment from CRIS*

<table>
<thead>
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<th>β Step 2</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Institution</td>
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<td>.043</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Pre-encounter Assimilation</td>
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<td>-.086</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pre-encounter Miseducation</td>
<td></td>
<td>.056</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-encounter Self Hate</td>
<td></td>
<td>.194</td>
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<tr>
<td>Immersion-Emersion Anti White</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internalization Multiculturalist Inclusive</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.215*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Internalization Afrocentricity</td>
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<td>-.074</td>
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<tr>
<td>$R^2$</td>
<td>.059</td>
<td>.261</td>
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<tr>
<td>$F$</td>
<td>1.751</td>
<td>3.751***</td>
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<td>$\Delta R^2$</td>
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<td>.203</td>
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<tr>
<td>$\Delta F$</td>
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<td>4.844***</td>
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</table>

*Note. N = 117. *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001  
β indicates standardized regression coefficient*

**GPA.** Hierarchical regression results (Table 9) tested a full model of 17 predictors (control variables, MIBI subscales, and CRIS subscales) that did not significantly predict GPA.

Hierarchical regression results (Table 10) tested a full model of 11 predictors (control variables and MIBI subscales) that did not significantly predict GPA.

Hierarchical regression results (Table 11) tested a full model of 10 predictors (control variables and CRIS subscales) that did not significantly predict GPA.
Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analyses Predicting GPA from MIBI and CRIS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step 1</th>
<th>β Step 1</th>
<th>β Step 2</th>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>.024</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Pre-encounter Self-Hate</td>
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<td>-.173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immersion-Emersion Anti-White</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.144</td>
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<td>.167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internalization Afrocentricity</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.022</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$R^2$   
$F$    
$Δ R^2$ 
$Δ F$

$N = 139$. *$p < .05$, **$p < .01$, ***$p < .001$

$β$ indicates standardized regression coefficient
Table 10.

Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analyses Predicting GPA from MIBI

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>β Step 1</th>
<th>β Step 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Step 1</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>-.122</td>
<td>-.126</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parental Annual Income</td>
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<td>-.166</td>
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<tr>
<td>Age</td>
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<td>-.082</td>
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<tr>
<td>Institution</td>
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<td>.047</td>
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<td><strong>Step 2</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nationalist</td>
<td></td>
<td>.108</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

|  | $R^2$   | .056 | .107 |
|  | $F$     | 2.001 | 1.379 |
|  | $\Delta R^2$ | .056 | .050 |
|  | $\Delta F$ | 2.001 | 1.022 |

*Note. N = 139. *$p < .05$, **$p < .01$, ***$p < .001$*

β indicates standardized regression coefficient
Table 11.

Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analyses Predicting GPA from CRIS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>β Step 1</th>
<th>β Step 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step 1</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
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<td>-.102</td>
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<td>Parental Annual Income</td>
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<td>-.160</td>
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<tr>
<td>Age</td>
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<td>-.017</td>
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<tr>
<td>Institution</td>
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<td>.094</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 2</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Pre-encounter Assimilation</td>
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<td>Immersion-Emersion Anti White</td>
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<td>-.227</td>
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<td>.074</td>
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<tr>
<td>Internalization Afrocentricity</td>
<td></td>
<td>.016</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ R^2 \]
\[ F \]
\[ \Delta R^2 \]
\[ \Delta F \]

Note. \( N = 144 \). *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001

β indicates standardized regression coefficient
Hypothesis 3. Goal commitment will predict academic success (academic adjustment, social adjustment, and GPA).

3.a.: Goal commitment will predict academic adjustment.

3.b.: Goal commitment will predict social adjustment.

3.c.: Goal commitment will predict GPA.

To assess the assumed linear relationship between goal commitment and academic success, multiple hierarchical regressions with each variable of academic success as separate dependent variables were run (Cohen et al., 2003). First, academic adjustment was entered in the main dialog box as the dependent variable. Second, the confounds (i.e., gender, socioeconomic status, age, and institution) were entered into block 1 of SPSS using the enter method in order to control for their contribution to the variance explained between predictor variables and academic adjustment. Third, goal commitment was entered into block 2 of SPSS as the independent variable using the enter method. Finally, the analysis was run. The $F$-statistic was examined for statistical significance of the regression equation as a whole to assess whether the independent variables together predicted the dependent variable better than predicting the mean. Upon determining the significance of the regression equation, beta coefficients were assessed and interpreted to determine how strongly goal commitment influenced academic adjustment, social adjustment, and GPA.

Academic adjustment. Hierarchical regression results (Table 12) tested a full model of five predictors (including control variables) that significantly predicted academic adjustment, $R^2 = .264$, [$F(5,164) = 11.760, p < .001$]; $Adjusted R^2 = .241$. This model accounted for approximately 26% of variance in academic adjustment among
African American college freshmen. After controlling for all other variables included in this model, goal commitment ($\beta = .470, p < .001$) emerged as a significant predictor where participants who endorsed higher scores of goal commitment also reported higher academic adjustment scores. The control variable annual income also emerged as significant ($\beta = .146, p = .032$) where participants who reported that their parent(s) made more annually also reported being better adjusted academically.

**Social adjustment.** Hierarchical regression results (Table 13) tested a full model of five predictors (including control variables) that significantly predicted social adjustment, $R^2 = .176$, $[F(5,128) = 5.456, p < .001]$; Adjusted $R^2 = .143$. This model accounted for approximately 18% of variance in social adjustment among African American college freshmen. After controlling for all other variables included in this model, goal commitment ($\beta = .348, p < .001$) emerged as a significant predictor where participants who endorsed higher scores of goal commitment reported being more adjusted socially.

**GPA.** Hierarchical regression results (Table 14) tested a full model of five predictors (including control variables) that significantly predicted GPA, $R^2 = .096$, $[F(5,205) = 4.342, p = .001]$; Adjusted $R^2 = .074$. This model accounted for approximately 10% of variance in GPA among African American college freshmen. Again, goal commitment ($\beta = .202, p = .003$) and annual income ($\beta = -.176, p = .009$) emerged as significant predictors. The higher participants’ goal commitment scores, the higher their GPAs. Conversely, participants who reported higher parental annual incomes reported lower GPAs.
Table 12.

*Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analyses Predicting Academic Adjustment from HWK*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>β Step 1</th>
<th>β Step 2</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
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<td>-.120</td>
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<td>Parental Annual Income</td>
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<td>.146*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Age</td>
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<td>Institution</td>
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<tr>
<td>HWK Goal Commitment</td>
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<td>.470***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$R^2$  | .051 | .246 |
$F$    | 2.234 | 11.760** |
$\Delta R^2$ | .0051 | .213 |
$\Delta F$ | 2.234 | 47.350*** |

*Note. N = 170. *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001
β indicates standardized regression coefficient
Table 13.

*Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analyses Predicting Social Adjustment from HWK*

<table>
<thead>
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<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
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<td>-.094</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parental Annual Income</td>
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<td>.070</td>
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<tr>
<td>Age</td>
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<td>.016</td>
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<td>5.456***</td>
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<td>18.142***</td>
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</table>

*Note. N = 134. *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001*

β indicates standardized regression coefficient
Table 14.

Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analyses Predicting GPA from HWK

<table>
<thead>
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<th>β Step 2</th>
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<td>-.094</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parental Annual Income</td>
<td>-.183**</td>
<td>-.176**</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-.026</td>
<td>-.049</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>.100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Step 2</td>
<td>HWK Goal Commitment</td>
<td></td>
<td>.202**</td>
</tr>
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</table>

$R^2$ | .056 | .096
$F$   | 3.076* | 4.342**
$\Delta R^2$ | .056 | .039
$\Delta F$  | 3.076  | 8.932**

Note. $N = 211$. *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001

β indicates standardized regression coefficient.

**Hypothesis 4.** Institutional climate subscales (racial tension, cross cultural comfort, diversity awareness, residence hall tension, fair treatment, faculty racism, and overall satisfaction) will predict academic success (academic adjustment, social adjustment, and GPA).

4.a.: Institutional climate subscales will predict academic adjustment.

4.b.: Institutional climate subscales will predict social adjustment.

4.c.: Institutional climate subscales will predict GPA.

To assess the assumed linear relationship between institutional climate and academic success, multiple hierarchical regressions with each variable of academic success as separate dependent variables were run (Cohen et al., 2003). First, academic
adjustment was entered in the main dialog box as the dependent variable. Second, potential confounds (i.e., gender, socioeconomic status, age, and institution) were entered into block 1 of SPSS using the enter method in order to control for their contribution to the variance explained between predictor variables and academic adjustment. Third, institutional climate was entered into block 2 of SPSS as the independent variable using the enter method. Finally, the analysis was run. The aforementioned procedure was followed with social adjustment and GPA entered in the main dialog box as dependent variables to test hypotheses 4.b. and 4.c. The $F$-statistic was examined for statistical significance of the regression equation as a whole to assess whether the independent variables together predicted the dependent variable better than predicting the mean. Upon determining the significance of the regression equation, beta coefficients were assessed and interpreted to determine how strongly institutional climate (racial tension, cross cultural comfort, diversity awareness, residence hall tension, fair treatment, faculty racism, and overall satisfaction) influenced academic adjustment, social adjustment, and GPA.

**Academic adjustment.** Hierarchical regression results (Table 15) tested a full model of 15 predictors (including control variables) that significantly predicted academic adjustment, $R^2 = .394$, [$F(15,126) = 5.452, p < .001]$; Adjusted $R^2 = .342$. This model accounted for approximately 39% of variance in academic adjustment among African American college freshmen. Four variables emerged as significantly contributing to the variance in academic adjustment after controlling for all other included variables: racial pressure ($\beta = .226, p = .014$), faculty racism ($\beta = -.268, p = .015$), lack of support ($\beta = .479, p < .001$), and overall satisfaction ($\beta = -.246, p = .025$). Participants scoring higher
on racial pressure, indicating a perception and experience of racial pressure on campus, reported higher academic adjustment. Participants scoring higher on faculty racism, endorsing the perception/experience of a racist atmosphere perpetuated by faculty, reported less adjustment academically. Participants endorsing higher scores of lack of support, an individual’s perception of help and support from faculty, students, and teaching assistants, reported higher academic adjustment. Participants who scored higher in overall satisfaction, the belief that the environment is academically and socially rewarding, reported lower scores of academic adjustment.

**Social adjustment.** Hierarchical regression results (Table 16) tested a full model of 15 predictors (including control variables) that significantly predicted social adjustment, $R^2 = .383$, $[F(15,99) = 4.092, p < .001]$; $Adjusted R^2 = .289$. This model accounted for approximately 38% of variance in social adjustment among African American college freshmen. Only one variable, lack of support, emerged as significantly contributing to the variance explained after controlling for all included variables ($\beta = .400$, $p = .001$). Participants who reported higher scores of lack of support also reported higher adjustment socially.

**GPA.** Hierarchical regression results (Table 17) tested a full model of 15 predictors (including control variables) that did not significantly predicted GPA.
Table 15.

*Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analyses Predicting Academic Adjustment from CACQ*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step 1</th>
<th>β Step 1</th>
<th>β Step 2</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
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<td>.002</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parental Annual Income</td>
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<tr>
<td>Age</td>
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<td>-.015</td>
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<tr>
<td>Institution</td>
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<td>-.144</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>Diversity Awareness</td>
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<tr>
<td>Racial Pressure</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Fair Treatment</td>
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<td>Faculty Racism</td>
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<tr>
<td>Respect for Other Cultures</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Satisfaction</td>
<td>-.246*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| $R^2$ | .051 | .394 |
| $F$   | 1.855 | 5.452*** |
| $\Delta R^2$ | .051 | .342 |
| $\Delta F$ | 1.855 | 6.463*** |

*Note. N = 142. *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001
β indicates standardized regression coefficient.*
Table 16.

*Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analyses Predicting Social Adjustment from CACQ*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>β Step 1</th>
<th>β Step 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>Faculty Racism</td>
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<td>Overall Satisfaction</td>
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| $R^2$              | .059     | .383     |
| $F$                | 1.720    | 4.092*** |
| $\Delta R^2$      | .059     | .324     |
| $\Delta F$        | 1.720    | 4.722*** |

*Note.* $N = 115$. *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001*

\( \beta \) indicates standardized regression coefficient.
Table 17.

*Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analyses Predicting GPA from CACQ*

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<td>Cross Cultural Comfort</td>
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<td>Diversity Awareness</td>
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<td>Racial Pressure</td>
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</thead>
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<td>.086</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\Delta F$</td>
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<td>1.190</td>
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</table>

*Note.* $N = 146$. *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001*

β indicates standardized regression coefficient.
Hypothesis 5. Racial identity subscales, goal commitment, and institutional climate subscales will predict academic success (academic adjustment, social adjustment, and GPA).

5.a.: Racial identity subscales, goal commitment, and institutional climate subscales will predict academic adjustment.

5.b.: Racial identity subscales, goal commitment, and institutional climate subscales will predict social adjustment.

5.c.: Racial identity subscales, goal commitment, and institutional climate subscales will predict GPA.

To assess the assumed linear relationship between intrapsychic and contextual predictors on academic success, multiple hierarchical regressions with each variable of academic success as separate dependent variables were run (Cohen, Cohen, West, & Akin, 2003). First, academic adjustment was entered in the main dialog box as the dependent variable. Second, potential confounds (i.e., gender, parental annual income, age, and institution) were entered into block 1 of SPSS using the enter method in order to control for their contribution to the variance explained between predictor variables and academic adjustment. Third, all predictor variables were entered into block 2 of SPSS as the independent variables using the enter method. Finally, the analysis was run. The aforementioned procedure was followed with social adjustment and GPA entered in the main dialog box as dependent variables to test hypotheses 5.b. and 5.c respectively. The $F$-statistic was examined for statistical significance of the regression equation as a whole to assess whether the independent variables together predicted the dependent variable better than predicting the mean. Upon determining significance of the regression
equation, beta coefficients were assessed and interpreted to determine how strongly the predictor variables influenced academic adjustment, social adjustment, and GPA.

**Academic adjustment.** Hierarchical regression results (Table 18) tested a full model of 29 predictors (control variables and the subscales of all predictors) that significantly predicted academic adjustment, $R^2 = .597$, [$F(29,107) = 5.476, p < .001$]; $Adjusted\ R^2 = .488$. This model accounted for about 60% of variance in academic adjustment among African American college freshmen. After controlling for all other variables, five variables were unique significant predictors of academic adjustment: goal commitment ($\beta = .358, p = .000$), private regard ($\beta = .227, p = .047$), racial pressure ($\beta = .243, p = .006$), lack of support ($\beta = .450, p = .000$), and overall satisfaction ($\beta = -.289, p = .005$). Participants who reported more goal commitment reported more academic adjustment. Those who endorsed greater private regard, the personal possession of positive feelings regarding African Americans, reported being more adjusted academically. Participants experiencing more racial pressure, a perception and experience of racial pressure on campus, reported more academic adjustment. Students who endorsed feeling lack of support reported more academic adjustment. Students who reported less overall satisfaction reported more academic adjustment.

**Social adjustment.** Hierarchical regression results (Table 19) tested a full model of 29 predictors (control variables and the subscales of all predictors) that significantly predicted social adjustment, $R^2 = .542$, [$F(29,82) = 3.353, p < .001$]; $Adjusted\ R^2 = .381$. This model accounted for approximately 54% of variance in social adjustment among African American college freshmen. Only three variables, goal commitment ($\beta = .203, p = .026$), public regard ($\beta = -.262, p = .017$) and lack of support ($\beta = .435, p = .002$) were
unique significant predictors of social adjustment after controlling for all other variables. Students who scored higher on goal commitment also reported higher social adjustment. A higher public regard score is indicative of an individual’s perception that others have positive feelings toward African Americans. Participants endorsing higher public regard reported being less adjusted socially. Participants endorsing higher scores of lack of support reported higher social adjustment.

**GPA.** Hierarchical regression results (Table 20) tested a full model of 29 predictors (control variables and the subscales of all predictors) significantly predicted GPA, $R^2 = .317$, $[F(29,108) = 1.731, p < .05]$; *Adjusted $R^2 = .134*. This model accounted for approximately 32% of variance in GPA among African American college freshmen. Five predictors, goal commitment ($\beta = .220, p = .023$), public regard ($\beta = -.272, p = .019$), minority ideology ($\beta = -.298, p = .013$), pre-encounter assimilation ($\beta = .429, p = .001$), and internalization multiculturalist inclusive ($\beta = .229, p = .033$) were unique significant contributors to the variance explained in GPA after controlling for all other variables. Participants reporting higher goal commitment scores also reported higher scores of GPA. Participants endorsing higher public regard reported lower GPAs. Participants who scored higher in identification with the minority ideology, endorsing that they see similarities between African Americans and other oppressed minority groups, reported lower GPAs. Students who endorsed higher scores on the pre-encounter assimilation scale, meaning that they identify with a pro-American reference group orientation and that race is not salient to them, reported higher scores of GPA. Students who scored higher in the internalization multiculturalist inclusive scale, indicating that
they focus on two or more salient cultural identities and a desire to promote cultures beyond the Black race, reported higher GPAs.
Table 18.

**Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analyses Predicting Academic Adjustment from All Predictors**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>ß Step 1</th>
<th>ß Step 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Step 1</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
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<td>.007</td>
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<tr>
<td>Overall Satisfaction</td>
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</table>

\[
R^2 \\
F \quad 1.788 \quad 5.476*** \\
\Delta R^2 \quad .051 \quad .546 \\
\Delta F \quad 1.788 \quad 5.806*** 
\]

*Note. N = 137. *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001

β indicates standardized regression coefficient
Table 19.

*Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analyses Predicting Social Adjustment from All Predictors*

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<th>β Step 2</th>
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<td>.049</td>
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\[ R^2 \] .059 .542  
\[ F \] 1.673 3.353***
\[ ∆ R^2 \] .059 .484  
\[ ∆ F \] 1.673 3.467***

Note. N = 112. *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001  
β indicates standardized regression coefficient
Table 20.

*Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analyses Predicting GPA from All Predictors*

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<td>.229*</td>
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<td>Internalization Afrocentricity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Respect for Other Cultures</td>
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Table 20. (continued)

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<th>β Step 2</th>
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<td>Comfort with Own Culture</td>
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<td>Overall Satisfaction</td>
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<tr>
<td>$\Delta R^2$</td>
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<td>.261</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$\Delta F$</td>
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<td>1.652*</td>
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</table>

*Note. N = 138. *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001

β indicates standardized regression coefficient
Chapter Four: Discussion

Purpose of the Study

The current study examined the variables that predict academic success among African American college students. Studying academic success among African American college students can support efforts in narrowing the achievement gap, promoting racial equality, and increasing income earnings and thus societal contributions among this population (Jencks & Phillips, 1998; Redd, 2000). This study utilized a within-group design that emphasized exploring these contributing variables among African American students solely; participants were not compared to other racial/ethnic groups. This within-group approach allowed strengths-based nuances existing within the African American student population to be identified and assessed. This study employed both intrapsychic and environmental factors as an attempt to create a realistic reflection of the college student experience. Additionally, this study’s examination of the confluence of these factors addresses an oversight in the existing literature, which commonly examines either intrapsychic or environmental contributors to academically related outcomes. This study was also comprised of behavioral aspects that, upon examination and understanding, can lend themselves to the development of institutional interventions that support academic success.

Summary of Results and Interpretations of Findings

Racial Identity. When examining the impact of the racial identity subscales on academic success, the MIBI racial identity subscale private regard emerged as a protective factor (i.e., positive predictor) of academic adjustment. The model employing both the MIBI and CRIS as predictors explained the most variance, at about 22%, but
produced no individually significant predictors when controlling for other included variables. Consistently, the model employing the CRIS accounted for about 18% of the variance in academic adjustment and also produced no significant individual predictors. This means that in both cases, the individual predictors added to the explanatory power of the model but were not themselves significant. However, the model employing solely the MIBI accounted for the least amount of variance, at about 17%, but showed that private regard uniquely contributed to the variance explained in this model. The directionality of prediction of the private regard subscale was not hypothesized for this analysis, as studies operationalizing academic success as academic adjustment that employed the MIBI as a measure of racial identity were not found. However, this finding supports the general hypothesis that racial identity subscales would predict academic adjustment and is consistent with the literature that identifies racial identity as a protective factor (Harper & Tuckman, 2006; Nasim et al., 2005; Oyserman et al., 2001; Reid, 2013; Sellers, Smith, et al., 1998).

When academic success was measured by social adjustment, racial identity subscales emerged as both positive and negative predictors. In the model employing both the MIBI and CRIS, about 38% of the variance in social adjustment was explained and two subscale variables of the MIBI emerged as uniquely contributing to that explained variance. Private regard, positive beliefs held by an individual regarding African Americans, positively predicted social adjustment. Public regard, the belief that others have positive opinions regarding African Americans, negatively predicted social adjustment. When the MIBI was the sole measure used to predict social adjustment, about the same amount of variance was explained (33%). However, three variables
significantly contributed to the amount of variance explained by this model: private regard, public regard, and minority ideology. Private regard and public regard remained protective and risk factors, respectively. Minority ideology, the ideology that sees similarities between African Americans and other oppressed minority groups, was a risk factor on social adjustment. Explaining the least amount of variance in social adjustment (about 26%), the multiculturalist inclusive identity internalization subscale of the CRIS emerged as a risk factor of social adjustment.

Though studies employing the subscales of the MIBI and CRIS to predict social adjustment were not found, it was assumed that the directionality of their predictive ability for academic adjustment and GPA would hold true when predicting social adjustment. This assumption was correct with regard to private and public regard. However, this assumption was incorrect in concluding the predictive directionality of the minority ideology subscale. Where the minority ideology subscale of the MIBI has been shown in the literature to positively predict academic related outcomes (e.g., GPA), it emerged as a negative predictor in this study. Additionally, the hypothesized prediction directionality of the internalization multiculturalist inclusive subscale of the CRIS was not supported by these results. These results align with the literature that identifies racial identity as both a risk and protective factor (Jaret & Reitzes, 2009; Reid, 2013; Sellers, Chavous, et al., 1998; Sellers, Smith, et al., 1998).

Specifically, these results show that particular ideologies, components, or perspectives of an individual’s racial identity can act as either a protective or risk factor. Personal beliefs that hold African Americans in a positive light (i.e., private regard) was the only racial identity variable to positively predict academic success (i.e., academic and
social adjustment). The belief that others view African Americans positively (i.e., public regard), minority ideology—identification with the desire to promote cultures beyond the Black race, and multicultural inclusive identity—emphasizing other salient cultural identities, all negatively predicted social adjustment. Thus, the discussion of specific identity types instead of the overarching construct of racial identity can aid in advancing the literature and supporting the academic wellbeing of African American students.

Other researchers have explored the predictive ability of specific racial identity subscales and found similar results. Employing the immersion-emersion anti-White subscale of the CRIS, Cokley and Chapman (2008) examined the impact that ethnic identity and racial identity have on academic achievement. Their sample included 274 African American freshmen through graduate students ranging in age from 17 to 41 ($M = 20.54$) who were attending a historically Black university in Texas. Cokley and Chapman found that racial identity (i.e., anti-White attitudes on the immersion-emersion subscale of the CRIS) negatively predicted college GPA, as African American students who identified with anti-White attitudes reported lower college grades. Though the immersion-emersion anti-White subscale was 1) significantly negatively correlated with social adjustment and academic adjustment and 2) negatively correlated with GPA in this dissertation research, it did not emerge significant in any analyses in this study. Additionally, where Cokley and Chapman found racial identity to significantly predict self-reported GPA in their research, the same did not hold true for this study. This difference could largely be due to the immersion-emersion anti-White subscale not emerging as a significant predictor in any of the racial identity regression models. Additionally, though inverse-reciprocal and logarithmic transformations were employed
to correct the distribution of the immersion-emersion anti-White subscale and GPA scores in this study, the lack of significance in predicting GPA could have resulted from the transformation of these scales. Racial identity, measured by the combination of the MIBI and CRIS and each measure separately, did not emerge as a significant predictor of academic success, as measured by GPA. This was not supportive of hypothesis 2.c that racial identity subscales would predict GPA.

**Institutional Climate.** When examining the impact of the institutional climate subscales on academic success, the CACQ subscales significantly predicted academic and social adjustment but not GPA. When predicting academic adjustment, about 39% of the variance in the model was explained and four subscales emerged as unique contributors to the amount of variance explained: racial pressure, faculty racism, lack of support, and overall satisfaction. Racial pressure and lack of support positively predicted academic adjustment and faculty racism and overall satisfaction negatively predicted academic adjustment. Racial pressure and lack of support positively predicted academic adjustment, where students who reported a greater perception and experience of racial pressure on campus and students who endorsed feeling unsupported by faculty, teaching assistants, and students, also reported higher academic adjustment. Faculty racism, the projection of a racist atmosphere by faculty, and overall satisfaction, the belief that the environment is socially and academically rewarding, negatively predicted academic adjustment. Though no direction of relationships were hypothesized for the predictive ability of institutional climate, the prediction outcomes of these subscales were somewhat surprising, as one would expect the directions of predictions to be inverted (i.e., racial pressure and lack of support emerging as negative predictors and overall satisfaction
emerging as a positive predictor). These surprising outcomes could, in part, be due to
data transformations as the lack of support subscale was transformed using a square root transformation. It could also be concluded that participants in this study were high achievers as the mean GPA was 3.26 and the mode 3.0. Thus, one could expect for participants in this study to be adjusted academically despite racial pressure or lack of support. The emergence of overall satisfaction as a negative predictor is an obscure finding that necessitates further research. The prediction value of faculty racism was consistent with expectations.

When predicting social adjustment, less variance was explained (about 38%) and only lack of support was shown to significantly contribute to the amount of variance explained in this model. Interestingly, lack of support again emerged as a protective factor, where higher endorsement of lack of support was consistent with higher scores of social adjustment. The direction of this relationship was not as surprising as the direction of the relationship between lack of support and academic adjustment, as one could conclude that students who feel unsupported academically would be likely to seek out support socially, thus reporting greater scores of social adjustment (Chavous, 2005; Rankin & Reason, 2005).

Regardless of the direction of the predictions, these results supported hypotheses 4.a. and 4.b. Hypothesis 4.c., that institutional climate would predict GPA, was not supported as the regression results (Table 14) that tested a full model of 15 predictors including control variables did not significantly predicted GPA. These results are also consistent with the literature, which shows a relationship between racial identity, institutional climate, and academic success. Racial identity has been studied as a
facilitator in connecting students to communities of support (Akbar, 1991; Allen & Bagozzi, 2001; Taylor & Moghaddam, 1994). Connections to communities of support within an institution (e.g., student organizations) can help cultivate the skills necessary to develop and maintain academic success (Gonzalez, 2002; Guiffrida, 2003, 2004; Guiffrida & Douthit, 2010), and can buffer against factors like residence hall tension, faculty racism, racial isolation and/or discrimination that may impede academic success (Ancis et al., 2000; Edman & Brazil, 2009; Farley, 2002; Helm et al., 1998, Rankin & Reason, 2005). Institutional climate is seen as “not only a function of what one has personally experienced, but also is influenced by perceptions of how members of the academy are regarded on campus (Rankin & Reason, 2005; p. 52)” . Thus, it makes sense to conclude that racial identity, a construct including “a combination of ethnic awareness, sociopolitical attitudes, and cultural or in-group versus out-group preferences” (Chavous et al., 2003, p. 1078) would influence an individual’s assessment of the institutional climate. Many significant correlations were shown to exist between subscales of the racial identity measures and the institutional climate measure in the correlations matrix. However, specific analyses assessing the relationship between racial identity and institutional climate were not conducted in this study.

Exploring the impact of racial identity, institutional climate, and self-efficacy on academic success of Black male students attending research institutions, Reid (2013) conducted an online survey including 190 participants, mostly juniors majoring in STEM fields, from five different universities. He found that African American male students who have a “resolved and stable racial identity,” as measured by a variant of the CRIS, the Black Racial Identity Scale (RAIS-B, Helms, 1990), and endorsed being
institutionally integrated (i.e., favorable views of their interactions with faculty and staff),
faired better academically (measured by self reported GPA) than students who were less
resolved and stable in their racial identity and also reported being less integrated in their
institution. Reid also found that the level of racial identity development affected
academic integration as only African American male students in the internalized stage of
racial identity benefited from “meaningful” faculty interactions.

**Goal Commitment.** When examining the impact of goal commitment on
academic success, the HWK significantly predicted academic adjustment, social
adjustment, and GPA. About 26% of the variance in the model predicting academic
adjustment was explained and goal commitment emerged as unique contributor to the
amount of explained variance. When predicting social adjustment, less variance was
explained (about 18%) and goal commitment again emerged as a significant contributor
to the amount of variance explained in this model. The least amount of variance was
explained in the model where goal commitment predicted GPA, at about 10%. Goal
commitment was also a significant unique contributor to the amount of explained
variance. In both the models predicting academic adjustment and GPA, the control
variable parental annual income emerged as a unique contributor to the amount of
variance explained. Where it positively predicted academic adjustment, it emerged as a
negative predictor of GPA. The directions of goal commitment predictions are as
expected, as it is likely to conclude that greater goal commitment would lead to greater
academic adjustment, social adjustment, and GPA. However, though not a major
emphasis of exploration in this study, the negative prediction relationship between
parental annual income and GPA is surprising and could warrant additional exploration.
Racial Identity, Goal Commitment, and Institutional Climate Combined.

When examining the impact of the racial identity subscales, goal commitment, and the institutional climate subscales on academic success, the combined variables significantly predicted academic adjustment, social adjustment, and GPA. This is somewhat consistent with the outcomes of the aforementioned models employing the racial identity subscales, institutional climate subscales, and goal commitment as separate predictors of academic success (i.e., academic adjustment and social adjustment were significantly predicted by all variables and GPA was only significantly predicted by the goal commitment scale). In the model employing the racial identity subscales, goal commitment, and the institutional climate subscales to predict academic adjustment, the included predictors accounted for about 60% of the variance in academic adjustment among African American college freshmen. Each predictor type (i.e., racial identity, goal commitment, and institutional climate) had unique variables that emerged as significantly contributing to the amount of variance explained in academic adjustment among African American college students. However, not each scale inventory had uniquely significant contributors to this explained variance, as none of the CRIS subscales emerged as significant contributors in this regression equation. Therefore, the CRIS added to the explanatory power of the model but was not itself significant.

Five variables emerged in this model as unique significant predictors of academic success when measured by academic adjustment: goal commitment, private regard, racial pressure, lack of support, and overall satisfaction. As expected, goal commitment positively predicted academic adjustment. Private regard again emerged as a positive predictor of academic success. Institutional climate was both a risk and protective factor,
as 1) racial pressure, a perception and experience of racial pressure on campus, and lack of support, a perception of help and support from faculty, students, and teaching assistants, positively predicted academic adjustment, and 2) overall satisfaction, the belief that the environment is academically and socially rewarding, negatively predicted academic adjustment. The directionality of these predictions is consistent with the outcomes of the aforementioned models that separately employed the variables to predict academic adjustment. However, this combined model explained about 20% more of the variance in academic adjustment than was explained by the aforementioned model including institutional climate subscales as the sole predictors (39%), about 33% more variance than explained by the model using the goal commitment scale as the sole predictor (26%), and about 37% to 43% more variance than the aforementioned models employing the racial identity subscales as separate predictors of academic adjustment (17% - 23%).

The model predicting social adjustment among African American college students showed all predictor types to be unique significant predictors and resulted in slightly less variance explained (about 54%) as the model predicting academic adjustment. Goal commitment emerged as a positive predictor of social adjustment. The racial identity public regard subscale emerged as a risk factor, as the belief that others’ have positive opinions regarding African Americans negatively predicted social adjustment. Lack of support was the only institutional climate variable to be a unique significant contributor and emerged as a protective factor. Again, no CRIS subscales emerged as unique significant predictors of social adjustment. The directionality of predictions is consistent with the aforementioned models. Though consistent in directionality, the amount of
explained variance and emergence of unique significant predictors differs. Consistent with the model employing the institutional climate subscales as sole predictors of social adjustment, lack of support emerged as a uniquely contributing protective factor. However, this combined model explains about 16% more of the variance in social adjustment than the model using the CACQ subscales alone (38%). Again, goal commitment emerged as a protective factor but the variance explained in the combined model exceeds the aforementioned model using the HWK alone by 37%. This combined model explained about 17% to 28% more variance than the aforementioned models employing the racial identity subscales as separate predictors of social adjustment among African American college students (26% - 38%), where public regard was also a risk factor. However, the aforementioned racial identity subscale models resulted in the emergence of unique significantly contributing variables that were not present in this combined model (e.g., private regard as a protective factor, minority ideology as a risk factor, and internalization multiculturalist inclusive identity as a risk factor).

When predicting GPA, the combined model explained about 32% of the variance and resulted in the emergence of five unique significant contributors: goal commitment, private regard, minority ideology, pre-encounter assimilation identity, and immersion multicultural inclusive identity. Because the goal commitment scale was the sole significant predictor of GPA among the aforementioned models, its model significance and resulting unique significant contributors are surprising findings. This model resulted in the least amount of variance explained among the combined models. However, it resulted in 22% more variance explained in GPA than did the model in which the goal commitment scale was the sole predictor. Interestingly, unlike the first two combined
models, all prediction types were not represented as unique significant contributors in this model as no institutional climate subscales emerged as significant. Additionally, in comparison to the aforementioned combined models, this model was the only model to show both MIBI and CRIS subscales as unique predictors. The multiculturalist inclusive identity subscale was the only CRIS subscale shown to uniquely contribute to the variance explained in any of the previous regression analyses. It emerged as a risk factor when predicting social adjustment by the CRIS solely. However, it—as well as the pre-encounter assimilation identity subscale of the CRIS which did not emerge as significant and any of the previous regression analyses—emerged as a positive predictor of GPA in this combined model.

Unlike the aforementioned models that explored the predictive ability of the racial identity subscales, goal commitment, and the institutional climate subscales separately on academic success, the inclusion of all intrapsychic and contextual variables together in this model allowed for their combined influence on academic adjustment, social adjustment, and GPA to be considered. As stated when discussing the predictive ability of racial identity subscales, goal commitment, and institutional climate subscales in separate models, the findings of this combined model are 1) consistent with the literature, 2) support the utility of exploring intrapsychic and contextual variables together such as racial identity, institutional climate, and goal commitment, and 3) further support the need for discussing specific identity types instead of the overarching construct of racial identity in particular when attempting to advance the literature and support the academic wellbeing of African American students.
Study Design

As stated in the Introduction and Literature Review section, it is important to understand the influence of the MIBI and CRIS in predicting academic success. The inclusion of both measures separately first allowed for the observation of their unique significantly contributing subscales and explained variance in academic success before assessing their combined influence with other predictive variables. Consistent with Marks et al. (2004) argument regarding the inconsistent findings in the literature that pertain to the predictive ability of racial identity, the critical analysis of these two leading racial identity measures separately and collectively within the same study sample lends itself to the possibility of developing an overarching theory and definition of racial identity. Because the results of regression analyses in which the MIBI and CRIS are explored independently and collectively are transparently presented in this study, researchers can draw conclusions about the utility of each measure in this study and can replicate and improve upon the use of these measures in future study samples.

For this reason, each predictor type was (i.e., racial identity subscales, goal commitment, and institutional climate subscales) examined separately for their influence in predicting academic success first before examining their predictive ability collectively. This, again, was done to gather their individual predictive abilities to understand how these variables functioned in this study sample independently before assessing their influence when combined with that of other variables. Though the aim of this study was to explore the confluence of intrapsychic and contextual variables in order to portray a more realistic reflection of academic success among African American college students (i.e., predictive variables explored collectively in one regression equation), its separate
exploration of predictors 1) added to the literature by exploring these variables within the study sample (not same regression equation) without the comparison to other students, and 2) allowed for the examination of the impact of each predictor in this study sample—apart from the change in impact that would happen as a result of the influence of other variables. Table 21 shows a comparison of regression analyses.

Though not a hypothesis in this study, the factor structure of the MIBI was examined to assess whether the original seven-factor model proposed by the authors held true for this study sample. This factor analysis was completed to get a better understanding of the MIBI scale structure in this study sample and to hopefully provide insight into the emergence and directionality of the unique significant contributors that emerged from this scale. Assumptions were met in order to conduct factor analysis (e.g., sample size, number of variables per likely factor, data screening/omission of outliers) and principal component analysis extraction with eigenvalues greater than one and pairwise exclusion of missing data were employed. A KMO value of .78 and a significant Bartlett’s test of sphericity ($\chi^2 (1,540) = 4807.70, p < .001$) indicated that the MIBI items in this study were factorable. The eigenvalue rule identified 15 factors for extracting. However, the scree test resulted in five identified factors.

Principle axis factoring was chosen as the extraction method and five was entered as the fixed number of factors to extract. The Promax rotation method was selected as Sellers and colleagues (1997, 1998) identified MIBI factors to be correlated. This five-factor model accounted for about 44% of the explained variance in MIBI scale. The pattern matrix was examined for the meaningfulness of results:

Sixteen items loaded on factor one, ranging from loadings of .40 to .70. This
factor included six Nationalist items with negative coefficients, three Assimilation items, three Humanist items, two Private Regard items, and two Minority ideology items. Factor one was named Integration as item themes emphasized interaction with and integration into mainstream society.

Eleven items loaded on factor two with ranges of .42 to .75. This factor included six Centrality items, four Private Regard items, and one Nationalist item. Because these item themes emphasized the importance of being Black and feelings one has as a Black person, this factor was named Positive Centrality.

Eight items loaded on factor three with ranges from .41 to .89. Six of these items were from the Public Regard subscale, one from the Centrality subscale, and one from the Humanist subscale. The Public Regard factor name was retained as majority of the factor items were from the Public Regard subscale and emphasized public views of African Americans.

Four items loaded onto factor four ranging from .43 to .56. This factor included two Minority items, one Humanist item, and one Assimilation item. This factor was named Multicultural Connectedness as themes emphasized the shared experiences of African Americans and other minority groups.

Four items also loaded onto factor five ranging from .42 to .49. Three items were from the Minority subscale and one from the Assimilation subscale. This factor was named Alliance Building as item themes emphasized the importance of connecting with others.

Because these results differed from that of the theoretical foundations of the MIBI, it can be concluded that expected directionalities for subscales might not hold true
in predictions in this study. Two of the three unique significant contributors to the variance explained in regression analyses in this study, private regard and minority ideology, were comprised of at least two new factors resulting from the EFA. Public Regard was the only initial subscale to hold true as a factor in this study. Public Regard, having the belief that others view African Americans positively (but not personally holding this view oneself) is a negative predictor of social adjustment and GPA among African American college students in this study. Attending to the two the remaining unique significant contributors that emerged from the MIBI, for participants in this study 1) Private Regard may more accurately be measuring positive centrality and integration and 2) Minority Ideology may more accurately be measuring multicultural connectedness, alliance building, and integration. Thus, an identity comprised of having positive views about oneself as Black and endorsement of the integration of Blacks into mainstream society positively predicted academic adjustment in this study. The directionality of prediction of the Minority Ideology subscale is still somewhat unclear, as the factor loadings would indicate that multicultural connectedness, alliance building, and integration negatively predict GPA among African American students in this study. Future studies that analyze the factor structure of the MIBI are warranted.
Table 21.

*Regression Analyses with Predictors, Explained Variance, and Significant Contributors*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Academic Adjustment</th>
<th>Social Adjustment</th>
<th>GPA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>23% Exp.Variance</td>
<td>38% Exp.Variance</td>
<td>Not Sig.Predicted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No significant contributors</td>
<td>Private regard (+)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Public regard (-)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MIBI</td>
<td>17% Exp.Variance</td>
<td>33% Exp.Variance</td>
<td>Not Sig.Predicted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Private regard (+)</td>
<td>Private regard (+)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gender-females (-)</td>
<td>Public regard (-)</td>
<td>Minority ideology (-)</td>
</tr>
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<td>CRIS</td>
<td>18% Exp.Variance</td>
<td>26% Exp.Variance</td>
<td>Not Sig.Predicted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No significant contributors</td>
<td>Multiculturalist inclus.(-)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HWK</td>
<td>26% Exp.Variance</td>
<td>18% Exp.Variance</td>
<td>10% Exp.Variance</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Goal commitment (+)</td>
<td>Goal commitment (+)</td>
<td>Goal commitment (+)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parental income (+)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Parental income (-)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CACQ</td>
<td>39% Exp.Variance</td>
<td>38% Exp.Variance</td>
<td>Not Sig.Predicted</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Racial pressure (+)</td>
<td>Lack of support (+)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Faculty racism (-)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lack of support (+)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Overall satisfact. (-)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MIBI, CRIS,</td>
<td>60% Exp.Variance</td>
<td>54% Exp.Variance</td>
<td>32% Exp.Variance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HWK, &amp; CACQ</td>
<td>Goal commitment (+)</td>
<td>Goal commitment (+)</td>
<td>Goal commitment (+)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Private regard (+)</td>
<td>Public regard (-)</td>
<td>Public regard (-)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Racial pressure (+)</td>
<td>Lack of support (+)</td>
<td>Minority ideology (-)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lack of support (+)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Pre-encounter assim. (+)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Overall satisfact. (-)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Multiculturalist inclus. (+)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Exp.Variance = the amount of variance explained; Not Sig.Predicted = the overall model was not significant; (+) = positively predicted outcome variable; (-) = negatively predicted outcome variable.
As seen in Table 21, the models combining the MIBI, CRIS, HWK, and CACQ explain the most variance in academic adjustment (60%), social adjustment (54%), and GPA (32%). These overall models also result in the emergence of multiple unique significant contributors from the goal commitment scale, the MIBI and CRIS subscales, and the institutional climate subscales. Therefore, these overall combined models—which present a more realistic reflection of the college student experience due to their inclusion of intrapsychic and contextual factors—are selected as the best representations of the predictors of academic success among African American college students. All racial identity and institutional climate subscales were included in these models as their presence, though not all emerging as unique significant contributors, is contributing to the overall variance explained and significance of these models. Specifically regarding the racial identity measures, studies have found racial identity to contribute to the variance explained in academic success in overall models but not significantly emerge as unique contributors to that explained variance (Awad, 2007). This is most likely due to the direct and indirect relationships among variables that resulted from the inclusion of additional predictors. However, because other studies have not shown the independent outcomes of predictive variables before assessing their combined predictive ability in regression analyses with other variables, the emergence of their unique significant predictors apart from other variables is never initially considered. Therefore, the justification that the likelihood for the absence of unique significant contributors is due to the presence of other included variables when examining predictors in overall models (without having examined the predictors independently) can only be hypothesized.
Limitations and Directions for Further Research

One major limitation of this study is the final sample size. Attempts were made to reach a significant number of respondents \((n = 242)\) to detect a small/medium effect size for the analyses needed to test the hypotheses of this study. Though more than 300 respondents took interest in this study, not all respondents chose to proceed with participation in this study. Attrition rates were high among the 275 participants who chose to continue in this study beyond the informed consent page, and some dropped out very early in the study (i.e., directly after completing the demographic data, not answering any of the survey scales). This presented a greater limitation as data cleaning resulted in a loss of cases that brought the total number of participants to 240. As a result, scale completion rates were as low as 57\% (social adjustment, \(n = 137\)) to as high as 100\% (HWK scale, \(n = 240\)). Due to this range in completion, analyses were conducted with pairwise deletion instead of listwise deletion. Pairwise deletion allowed analyses to be run without the influence of a particular participant if that participant had any necessary data points missing during calculations. This method enabled the retention of more participant cases for analyses. Though more cases were retained for analyses, the inability to retain the number of participants needed to detect a small/medium effect size limits the capacity to determine the meaningfulness of results.

Gender has been shown to be a moderating factor in the study of academic success among African American students, where African American males have lower outcomes of success than African American females (Buchman & DiPrete, 2006; Fashola, 2005; Irving & Hudley, 2008; Palmer & Young, 2008). Thus, the distribution of gender can also be seen as a limitation of this study as the majority of the participants,
158 (65.8%) were female which means that the male student perspective was not equally represented. Though unequally distributed, the percentages of males and females in this study reflect the current entry and completion demographics among college students (Ross et al., 2012). Age, another controlled variable in this study, may act as a mediator between the predictor variables and academic success such that younger students may not be at stage of development where they have well defined academic goals, are aware of institutional climate concerns, and have adjusted well academically or socially within their institutions of higher education. The majority of participants (62.9%) in this study were under the age of 20 (with 35.4% of participants who were 18 years old and 27.5% of participants who were 19 years old).

The self-report and online design of this study can also be seen as a limitation for a number of reasons. First, participants may have responded in a manner that presented them more favorably than authentic responses might have. Second, though the flexibility and convenience of completing this survey online may have been appealing to some participants, it may have also created a condition of little to no motivation/accountability to complete the survey. Thus, participants may not have been invested in their participation or the outcome of this research, which could have led to the high attrition rates. Third, the anonymity present in completing this online survey and the average time to survey completion (30 minutes) may have further contributed to the high attrition rates of this study. For participants who did not elect to leave the study, maturation effects may have presented as response setting in items toward the end of the study. Survey instruments were presented in random order through Qualtrics as an attempt to proactively address the impact of maturation effects. Though participants were sampled
nationally, a final limitation of this study is the extent to which results can be generalized to the larger population. Initially, data collection efforts were concentrated within the state of Kentucky. This resulted in the participating institutions in Kentucky having a higher percentage of respondents than institutions outside of the state. The likelihood that respondents from institutions in the state of Kentucky could have responded similarly due to their shared institutional experiences is higher than that of institutions where there were fewer participants who responded. However, participants from Kentucky institutions were only 29.6% of the study sample. As a whole, participants in this study may have had particular characteristics that could have impacted research findings. For example, students who completed this study may have been more academically engaged, which led to their taking time to complete this study. This, in turn, would limit generalizability.

Despite the aforementioned limitations, this study has beneficial implications for future research. Further research employing both intrapsychic and environmental factors is needed to produce a realistic impression of the African American college student experience in the literature. Exploring the factors that contribute to African American college student success from positive psychological approaches can facilitate the understanding of the strengths and protective factors possessed by this population. Future research should continue to explore academic related outcomes within the African American population, limiting the research that employs across-group comparisons.

Future researchers should consider their study design when employing online survey tools, as more time may need to be allotted and participants targeted in order to obtain an ideal number of cases on which to conduct analyses. Future researchers may
also consider condensing the length of their survey instruments to appeal to an online subject pool should they choose to utilize this data collection method. Also, future researchers should attempt to have an equal distribution of gender among its participants. Though gender was controlled in this study and explorations of gender were not conducted, its impact may be of importance in future studies.

Results from this study showed that combined models of academic success were the best predictors, as 1) academic adjustment, social adjustment, and GPA were all significantly predicted, 2) the most variance in academic success was explained among these models, and 3) the greatest number of unique significant contributors to the explained variance emerged in these models. The MIBI appeared to be a better predictor of academic success than the CRIS, as its subscales more often emerged as unique significant contributors to the explained variance in regression analyses. Future research should continue to explore the relationship between the MIBI and CRIS, assess the factor structures of these measures, and possibly operationalize racial identity through the use of the MIBI. Similar to Cokley and Chapman’s research (2008), future researchers may want to consider selecting specific subscales of the MIBI to use in data collection and analyses. Findings from this dissertation study showed private regard, public regard, and minority ideology subscales of the MIBI and pre-encounter assimilation and multicultural inclusive identity subscales of the CRIS to be significant predictors to the variance explained in academic success. These subscales should be explored further in future research.

The pre-encounter assimilation and the multicultural inclusive identities of the CRIS were both positive predictors of GPA among African American college students in
this study. The pre-encounter assimilation identity is characterized by an individual’s emphasis on the insignificance of race and American reference group orientation. During this stage, identity conflict does not exist. The multicultural inclusive identity reflects one’s reaching the ultimate stage of racial identity development in the CRIS and emphasizes building alliances with communities outside of the African American race. This stage symbolizes a resolution of identity conflict and the development of security in one’s racial identity that supports the respect and acceptance of a Black identity while allowing for the establishment of relationships with (and respect for) individuals of other ethnicities/races (Cross, 1991). Thus, they were expected to emerge as protective factors in this study where students who endorsed being at these stages would also report higher scores of academic success. These results were seen in the combined model predicting academic success when measured by GPA and support further research regarding the manner in which the predictive ability of racial identity subscales is assessed.

Interestingly, the directionality of the significantly emerging CACQ variables was surprising, as racial pressure positively predicted academic adjustment, lack of support positively predicted academic and social adjustment, and overall satisfaction negatively predicted academic adjustment. Based on the subscale items, one would expect the inverse outcomes to be true (i.e., racial pressure and lack of support to negatively predict academic success and overall satisfaction to positively predict academic success).

However, existing theoretical concepts begin to aid in the understanding of the findings of this study. Resilience theorists discuss individuals’ ability to “bounce back” or recover when faced with obstacles and to thrive in adverse circumstances (Gordon, 1995; Miller & MacIntosh, 1999). Therefore, resilience could possibly act as a buffer among students
in this study who perceive a lack of support from university/college personnel and pressure within their institutions. This buffering action could exist to the extent that students are not only protected from adverse situations, but they are moreover “propelled” into success. These variables, and the general concept of institutional climate, warrant further research.

**Implications for Educators and Counseling Psychologists**

Given that the identity of a counseling psychologist is one that 1) emphasizes normative foundations of development, 2) emphasizes facilitative personal and environmental conditions that lead to adaptive outcomes, 3) attends to person-environment interactions, 4) focuses on prevention rather than intervention, and 5) values diversity and multiculturalism (Gelso & Fretz, 2001), this study has findings that can advance the scholarship of psychological and academic wellbeing among African American students while complying with counseling psychology values.

Baber (2012) writes that the literature regarding academic success often fails to examine the influence educational institutions have on reproducing racial hierarchies, which in turn impact student outcomes. Using the significant predictors from the CACQ, psychologists can collaborate with institution educators to establish ongoing assessment of students’ experiences of racial pressure, support (or lack thereof), and overall satisfaction. Establishing these ongoing assessments can aid in emphasizing facilitative personal and environmental conditions that can lead to a connection and commitment to the institution (Baber, 2012) and thus adaptive academic and psychological outcomes. Additionally, establishing ongoing assessments, as opposed to no assessments or exit interview assessments, supports a focus on prevention rather than intervention. These
assessments will also attend to person-environment interactions, taking record of students’ experiences from their own perspective and utilizing students’ feedback to impact change within their own institutions of higher education.

Moreover, future researchers can emulate this study by similarly meeting one of the challenges of counseling psychology research to collaborate “hand-in-hand” with psychologists of other disciplines and other researchers outside the field of psychology. Ponterotto and Park-Taylor (2007) wrote in the Journal of Counseling Psychology that, “counseling psychology research in the racial and ethnic identity area could be enhanced through increased interdisciplinary and international cooperative efforts” (p. 285). Thus, this study’s use of a major sociological theoretical foundation coupled with its application in the educational and counseling psychology literature serves as a template for future research.

The results of this study demonstrate the importance of understanding the perspective of students regarding themselves and their institutions. Pursuing this understanding can not only contribute to identifying the unique factors that contribute to success among African American students, but can also help educators and psychologists in establishing communities that are more supportive of the unique needs of African American students. Specifically, these results suggest that educators and psychologists should work on fostering individuals’ perceptions of themselves as African Americans that are positive. Using positive psychological approaches similar to those conducted in this study may contribute to researchers and educators’ ability to understand African American college students’ academic success through the exploration of racial identity, institutional climate, and goal commitment to develop interventions from a positive,
strengths-based, supportive framework. Counseling psychologists can take a lead role in this regard by 1) conducting skills based empowering workshops within institutional settings that educate other university personnel on ways to employ strength-based supportive interventions with African American students and 2) encouraging resilience and identity development while working with clients individually or in group settings.
Appendix A: Scripts and Questionnaires

Solicitation Script

Dear (insert name of recipient),

My name is La Toya B. Smith and I am a doctoral candidate in the Counseling Psychology program at the University of Kentucky. I am in the process of collecting data for my dissertation, which focuses on the factors that contribute to academic success in African American college students, and I am requesting your assistance. I would like to know if I could recruit participants for my research study through your list serve. The survey will take around 30 minutes to complete, and students who participate can choose to enter a drawing to win one of twenty $20 Wal-Mart gift cards. Should you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to email me at La.ToyaSmith@uky.edu. Thank you for your time and consideration and I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

La Toya B. Smith, MS, EdS
Doctoral Candidate
Counseling Psychology
University of Kentucky
Study Information

Title of Study: Predictors of Academic Success among African American College Students

Investigators: La Toya B. Smith, MS, EdS (Principal Investigator), Keisha M. Love, PhD, and Kenneth M. Tyler, PhD (Research Co-Advisors)

INTRODUCTION
The purpose of this study is to examine the factors that contribute to academic success among African American college students.

This is a brief research study. You must be an enrolled student at a college or university in the United States, at least 18 years of age or older, self-identify as African American/Black or of African American/Black descent, and be a freshman in order to participate in this study. Please take the time to read this document before deciding whether you would like to participate. If you wish to retain a copy of this informed consent form for your information and record, please print this page.

WHY ARE YOU BEING INVITED TO TAKE PART IN THIS RESEARCH?
You are being invited to take part in a research study about the factors that contribute to academic success among African American college students. You are being invited to take part in this research study because you attend a college or university in the United States, are at least 18 years of age or older, self-identify as African American/Black or of African American/Black descent, and are a freshman.

WHO IS DOING THE STUDY?
The person in charge of this study is La Toya B. Smith, MS, EdS, (Principal Investigator) a Doctoral Candidate in the Counseling Psychology program in the Department of Educational, School, and Counseling Psychology at the University of Kentucky. She is being guided in this research by Drs. Keisha Love and Kenneth Tyler (Co-Advisors).

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY?
By doing this study, we hope to learn whether racial identity, goal commitment, and institutional climate predict academic success among African American college students.

ARE THERE REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD NOT TAKE PART IN THIS STUDY?
You must be an enrolled student at a college or university in the United States, at least 18 years of age or older, self-identify as African American/Black or of African American/Black descent, and a freshman in order to participate in this study. If you do not meet the aforementioned conditions, you should not take part in this study.

WHERE IS THE STUDY GOING TO TAKE PLACE AND HOW LONG WILL IT LAST?
The research will be conducted through this online survey tool. You can complete the survey via campus or your own personal computer. If you agree to participate, the survey
will take around 30 minutes to complete.

WHAT WILL YOU BE ASKED TO DO?
Participation in this research study is completely voluntary. If you agree to take part in this study, your participation will take about 30 minutes and will consist of filling out a few short surveys. No personally identifying information will be given out about you, and your responses cannot be traced back to you.

WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS?
To the best of our knowledge, the things you will be doing will have no more risk of harm than you would experience in everyday life. You may find some questions we ask you to be upsetting or stressful. If these feelings become problematic, please seek services at your university counseling center.

WILL YOU BENEFIT FROM TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?
There is no guarantee that you will get any benefit from taking part in this study. Your willingness to take part, however, may help society as a whole better understand the factors that contribute to academic success among African American college students.

DO YOU HAVE TO TAKE PART IN THE STUDY?
If you decide to take part in the study, it should be because you really want to volunteer. You will not lose any benefits or rights you would normally have if you choose not to volunteer. You can stop at any time during the study and still keep the benefits and rights you had before volunteering.

IF YOU DON’T WANT TO TAKE PART IN THE STUDY, ARE THERE OTHER CHOICES?
If you do not want to be in the study, there are no other choices except not to take part in the study.

WHAT WILL IT COST YOU TO PARTICIPATE?
There are no costs associated with taking part in the study.

WILL YOU RECEIVE ANY REWARDS FOR TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?
For your time and efforts in completing the survey, you may enter a lottery to win one of twenty $20 Wal-Mart gift cards. There is an approximate 1 in 15 chance of winning a gift card. The drawing will be held after the completion of data collection and winners will be notified via email.

WHO WILL SEE THE INFORMATION THAT YOU GIVE?
Please be aware, while we make every effort to safeguard your data once received from the online survey/data gathering company, given the nature of online surveys, as with anything involving the Internet, we can never guarantee the confidentiality of the data while still on the survey/data gathering company’s servers, or while en route to either them or us. It is also possible the raw data collected for research purposes may be used for marketing or reporting purposes by the survey/data gathering company after the
research is concluded, depending on the company’s Terms of Service and Privacy policies.

The principal investigator and the research team members will have access to the data and the data will be stored on the principal investigator’s computer with password protected computer files. For those who provide additional information to us for the lottery, we will keep private all research records that identify you to the extent allowed by law. However, we may be required to show information which identifies you to people who need to be sure we have done the research correctly; these would be people from such organizations as the University of Kentucky. Identifiable information will be destroyed after data collection is completed and the lottery winners are notified. Your information will be combined with information from other people taking part in the study. When we write about the study to share it with other researchers, we will write about the combined information we have gathered. This study is anonymous. That means that no one, not even members of the research team, will know that the information you give came from you.

CAN YOUR TAKING PART IN THE STUDY END EARLY?
Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you may refuse to participate or leave the study at any time by clicking the exit button. If you decide not to take part in the study or leave the study early, it will not result in any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

WHAT IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS, SUGGESTIONS, CONCERNS, OR COMPLAINTS?
Before you decide whether to accept this invitation to take part in the study, please ask any questions that might come to mind now. Later, if you have questions, suggestions, concerns, or complaints about the study, you can contact the investigator, La Toya B. Smith at La.ToyaSmith@uky.edu or Drs. Keisha M. Love (Keisha.Love@uky.edu) or Kenneth M. Tyler (Kenneth.Tyler@uky.edu). If you have any questions about your rights as a volunteer in this research, contact the staff in the Office of Research Integrity at the University of Kentucky at 859-257-9428 or toll free at 1-866-400-9428.

Clicking on the “next/begin” button below will bring you to the survey and indicate that you have read the information contained in this form and agree to participate in this study.
DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

1. College/University: ________________

2. Major: ________________

3. Age: ________________

4. Gender: ____ male  ____ female

5. When was your first semester of enrollment (e.g., Fall '04, Spring '09)?

6. Have you been consistently enrolled at your institution? (yes or no)

   If no, answer the following:

   Greatest number of consecutive semesters enrolled _____

   Greatest number of consecutive semesters not enrolled _____

   What reasons contributed to these interruptions?

7. What is your current enrollment status?

   ___ full-time  ____ part-time

8. How many credits are you taking (if this is currently a summer/intersession term, report your hours for the last regular term)?

9. What is your grade point average (GPA)?

10. What is your annual income (estimate if not sure):

    ___$0-10,000  ____ $10,001-20,000  ____ $20,001-30,000  ____ $30,001-40,000

    ____ $40,001-50,000  ____ $50,001 and more

11. What is your parent(s)’ annual income (estimate if not sure):

    ___$0-10,000  ____ $10,001-20,000  ____ $20,001-30,000  ____ $30,001-40,000

    ____ $40,001-50,000  ____ $50,001 and more
12. Mother’s (female caregiver) highest level of education:
   __ less than high school diploma  __ high school diploma/equivalent
   __ trade/technical/vocational training
   __ some college   __ associates degree   __ bachelors degree
   __ some grad. school    __ master’s degree    __ specialists degree
   __ doctoral degree (PhD/MD/JD/EdD/PharmD)

13. Father’s (male caregiver) highest level of education:
   __ less than high school diploma  __ high school diploma/equivalent
   __ trade/technical/vocational training
   __ some college   __ associates degree   __ bachelors degree
   __ some grad. school    __ master’s degree    __ specialists degree
   __ doctoral degree (PhD/MD/JD/EdD/PharmD)

14. What is your mother (female caregiver’s) occupation?

15. What is you father’s (male caregiver’s) occupation?

16. What is your desired occupation:

17. What is your primary goal/reason for attending college:

18. What is your secondary goal/reason for attending college:

19. How much education do you expect to get during your lifetime?
   __ some college   __ associates degree   __ bachelors degree
   __ some grad. school    __ master’s degree    __ specialists degree
   __ doctoral degree (PhD/MD/JD/EdD/PharmD)
GOALS

HWK GOAL COMMITMENT SCALE

Participants respond on a 5-point Likert scale with “1” indicating “strongly disagree” and “5” indicating “strongly agree.”

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>3</td>
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Thinking back to the goals you identified at the beginning of this survey, indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements.

1. It’s hard to take this goal seriously. (R)
2. It’s unrealistic for me to expect to reach this goal. (R)
3. It is quite likely that this goal may need to be revised, depending on how things go. (R)
4. Quite frankly, I don’t care if I achieve this goal or not. (R)
5. I am strongly committed to pursuing this goal.
6. It wouldn’t take much to make me abandon this goal. (R)
7. I think this is a good goal to shoot for.
8. I am willing to put forth a great deal of effort beyond what I’d normally do to achieve this goal.
9. There is not much to be gained by trying to achieve this goal.
RACIAL IDENTITY

MULTIDIMENSIONAL INVENTORY OF BLACK IDENTITY

Participants respond on a 7-point Likert scale where a response of “1” indicates “strongly disagree,” “4” indicates “neutral,” and “7” indicates “strongly agree.”

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<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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1. Overall, being Black has very little to do with how I feel about myself.
2. It is important for Black people to surround their children with Black art, music and literature.
3. Black people should not marry interracially.
4. I feel good about Black people.
5. Overall, Blacks are considered good by others.
6. In general, being Black is an important part of my self-image.
7. I am happy that I am Black.
8. I feel that Blacks have made major accomplishments and advancements.
9. My destiny is tied to the destiny of other Black people.
10. Blacks who espouse separatism are as racist as White people who also espouse separatism.
11. Blacks would be better off if they adopted Afrocentric values.
12. Black students are better off going to schools that are controlled and organized by Blacks.
13. Being Black is unimportant to my sense of what kind of person I am.
14. Black people must organize themselves into a separate Black political force.

15. In general, others respect Black people.

16. Whenever possible, Blacks should buy from other Black businesses.

17. Most people consider Blacks, on the average, to be more ineffective than other racial groups.

18. A sign of progress is that Blacks are in the mainstream of America more than ever before.

19. I have a strong sense of belonging to Black people.

20. The same forces which have led to the oppression of Blacks have also led to the oppression of other groups.

21. A thorough knowledge of Black history is very important for Blacks today.

22. Blacks and Whites can never live in true harmony because of racial differences.

23. Black values should not be inconsistent with human values.

24. I often regret that I am Black.

25. White people can never be trusted where Blacks are concerned.

26. Blacks should have the choice to marry interracially.

27. Blacks and Whites have more commonalties than differences.

28. Black people should not consider race when buying art or selecting a book to read.

29. Blacks would be better off if they were more concerned with the problems facing all people than just focusing on Black issues.

30. Being an individual is more important than identifying oneself as Black.

31. We are all children of a higher being, therefore, we should love people of all races.

32. Blacks should judge Whites as individuals and not as members of the White race.
33. I have a strong attachment to other Black people.

34. The struggle for Black liberation in America should be closely related to the struggle of other oppressed groups.

35. People regardless of their race have strengths and limitations.

36. Blacks should learn about the oppression of other groups.

37. Because America is predominantly white, it is important that Blacks go to White schools so that they can gain experience interacting with Whites.

38. Black people should treat other oppressed people as allies.

39. Blacks should strive to be full members of the American political system.

40. Blacks should try to work within the system to achieve their political and economic goals.

41. Blacks should strive to integrate all institutions which are segregated.

42. The racism Blacks have experienced is similar to that of other minority groups.

43. Blacks should feel free to interact socially with White people.

44. Blacks should view themselves as being Americans first and foremost.

45. There are other people who experience racial injustice and indignities similar to Black Americans.

46. The plight of Blacks in America will improve only when Blacks are in important positions within the system.

47. Blacks will be more successful in achieving their goals if they form coalitions with other oppressed groups.

48. Being Black is an important reflection of who I am.

49. Blacks should try to become friends with people from other oppressed groups.
50. The dominant society devalues anything not White male oriented.

51. Being Black is not a major factor in my social relationships.

52. Blacks are not respected by the broader society.

53. In general, other groups view Blacks in a positive manner.

54. I am proud to be Black.

55. I feel that the Black community has made valuable contributions to this society.

56. Society views Black people as an asset.

CENTRALITY ITEMS (8): 1(R), 6, 9, 13 (R), 19, 33, 48, 51 (R)

PRIVATE REGARD ITEMS (6): 4, 7, 8, 24 (R), 54, 55

PUBLIC REGARD ITEMS (6): 5, 15, 17 (R), 52 (R), 53, 56

ASSIMILATION ITEMS (9): 10, 18, 37, 39, 40, 41, 43, 44, 46

HUMANIST ITEMS (9): 23, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31,32, 35

MINORITY ITEMS (9): 20, 34, 36, 38, 42, 45, 47, 49, 50

NATIONALIST ITEMS (9): 2, 3, 11, 12, 14, 16, 21, 22, 25

**Cross Racial Identity Scale**

1. As an African American, life in America is good for me. (Filler)

2. I think of myself as an American and seldom as a member of a racial group. (PA)

3. Too many Blacks “glorify” the drug trade and fail to see opportunities that don’t involve crime. (PM)

4. I go through periods when I am down on myself because I am Black. (PSH)

5. As a multiculturalists, I am connected to many groups (Hispanics, Asian Americans, Whites, Jews, gays & lesbians, etc.). (IMCI)
6. I have a strong feeling of hatred and disdain for all White people. (IEAW)
7. I see and think about things from an Afrocentric perspective. (IA)
8. When I walk into a room, I always take note of the racial make-up of the people around me. (Filler)
9. I am not so much a member of a racial group as I am an American. (PA)
10. I sometimes struggle with negative feelings about being Black. (PSH)
11. My relationship with God plays an important role in my life. (Filler)
12. Blacks place more emphasis on having a good time than on hard work. (PM)
13. I believe that only those Black people who accept an Afrocentric perspective can truly solve the race problem in America. (IA)
14. I hate the White community and all that it represents. (IEAW)
15. When I have a chance to make a new friend, issues of race and ethnicity seldom play a role in whom that person might be. (Filler)
16. I believe it is important to have both a Black identity and multicultural perspective, which is inclusive of everyone (e.g., Asian, Latinos, gays & lesbians, Jews, Whites, etc.). (IMCI)
17. When I look in the mirror at my Black image, sometimes I do not feel good about what I see. (PSH)
18. If I had to put a label on my identity, it would be “American” and not African American. (PA)
19. When I read the newspaper or a magazine, I always look for articles and stories that deal with race and ethnic issues. (Filler)
20. Many African Americans are too lazy to see opportunities that are right in front of
them. (PM)

21. As far as I am concerned, affirmative action will be needed for a long time. (Filler)

22. Black people cannot truly be free until our daily lives are guided by Afrocentric values and principles. (IA)

23. White people should be destroyed. (IEAW)

24. I embrace my own Black identity, but I also respect and celebrate the cultural identities of other groups (e.g., Native Americans, Whites, Latinos, Jews, Asian-Americans, gays & lesbians, etc.). (IMCI)

25. Privately, I sometimes have negative feelings about being Black. (PSH)

26. If I had to put myself into categories, first I would say I am American, and second I am a member of a racial group. (PA)

27. My feelings and thoughts about God are very important to me. (Filler)

28. African Americans are too quick to turn to crime to solve their problems. (PM)

29. When I have a chance to decorate a room, I tend to select pictures, posters, or works of art that express strong racial-cultural themes. (Filler)

30. I hate White people. (IEAW)

31. I respect the ideas that other Black people hold, but I believe that the best way to solve our problems is to think Afrocentrically. (IA)

32. When I vote in an election, the first thing I think about is the candidate’s record on racial and cultural issues. (Filler)

33. I believe it is important to have both a Black identity and a multicultural perspective, because this connects me to other groups (Hispanics, Asian-Americans, Whites, Jews, gays & lesbians, etc.). (IMCI)
34. I have developed an identity that stresses my experiences as an American more than my experiences as a member of a racial group. (PA)

35. During a typical week in my life, I think about racial and cultural issues many, many times. (Filler)

36. Blacks place too much importance on racial protest and not enough on hard work and education. (PM)

37. Black people will never be free until we embrace and Afrocentric perspective. (IA)

38. My negative feelings toward White people are very intense. (IEAW)

39. I sometimes have negative feelings about being Black. (PSH)

40. As a multiculturalist, it is important for me to be connected with individuals from all cultural backgrounds (Latinos, gays & lesbians, Jews, Native Americans, Asian-Americans, etc.). (IMCI)

Filler= Item not associated with any subscale.

PA= Pre-Encounter Assimilation

PM= Pre-Encounter Miseducation

PSH= Pre-Encounter Self-Hatred

IEAW= Immersion-Emersion Anti-White

IMCI= Internalization Multiculturalist Inclusive

IA= Internalization Afrocentricity (formerly Black Nationalist [IBN])

INSTITUTIONAL CLIMATE

CULTURAL ATTITUDES AND CLIMATE QUESTIONNAIRE

Participants respond to a 5-point Likert type scale, where “1” indicates “strongly disagree” and “5” indicates “strongly agree.” An “NA” category is also included in this
Likert scale for items that may not be applicable to participants (e.g., residence hall tension items may be marked as “NA” for participants who have never lived in a residence hall).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Racial Tension

1. There is racial conflict on campus.
2. There is racial/ethnic separation on campus.
3. There are interracial tensions in the classroom.
4. I have been exposed to a racist atmosphere in the classroom.
5. I have been exposed to a racist atmosphere outside the classroom.
6. Students are resentful of others whose race/ethnicity is different from their own.

Cross-cultural Comfort

1. I am comfortable going to see a faculty member of my own race/ethnicity.
2. I am comfortable speaking with others about my racial/ethnic background.
3. I am comfortable being in situations where I am the only person of my racial/ethnic group.
4. I am comfortable saying what I think about racial/ethnic issues.
5. I am comfortable being with people whose racial/ethnic backgrounds are different from my own.
6. I am comfortable being with people whose racial/ethnic backgrounds are the same as my own.
Diversity awareness

1. I now recognize culturally-biased behavior I had not previously identified.
2. I now discuss topics related to cultural awareness with friends.
3. I now stop myself from using language that may be offensive to others.
4. I now handle negative language used by another in such a way as to try to educate the other person.
5. I now initiate contact with people who are not of my culture or ethnic background.
6. My experiences since coming to the university have led me to become more understanding of racial/ethnic differences.

Racial Pressure

1. I feel there are expectations about my academic performance because of my race/ethnicity.
2. I feel pressured to participate in ethnic activities at the university.
3. I feel I need to minimize various characteristics of my racial/ethnic culture (e.g., language, dress) to be able to fit in at the university.
4. I feel I am expected to represent my race or ethnic group in discussions in class.

Residence Hall Tension

1. There are interracial tensions in residence halls.
2. University police treat me fairly.
3. Residence hall personnel treat me fairly.
4. I have been exposed to activities and programs in residence halls about the history, culture and/or social issues of racial and ethnic groups other than Whites.
5. I have been exposed to other university programs or activities about the history, culture and/or social issues of racial and ethnic groups other than Whites.

   Fair Treatment
1. Faculty treat me fairly.
2. Teaching assistants treat me fairly.
3. Students treat me fairly.

   Faculty Racism
1. I have often been exposed to a racist atmosphere created by faculty in the classroom.
2. I have often been exposed to a racist atmosphere created by faculty outside the classroom.

   Respect for other cultures
1. Faculty respect students of different racial and ethnic groups.
2. Students respect other students of different racial and ethnic groups.
3. There is a great deal of friendships between students of different racial and ethnic groups.

   Lack of support
1. I often have difficulty getting help or support from faculty.
2. I often have difficulty getting help or support from students.
3. I often have difficulty getting help or support from teaching assistants.

   Comfort with own culture
1. I am comfortable speaking with others about my racial/ethnic background.
2. I am comfortable being in a situation where I am the only person of my racial/ethnic group.
Overall satisfaction

1. This university provides an environment for the free and open expression of ideas, opinions, and beliefs.
2. Overall, my educational experience at this university has been a rewarding one.
3. I would recommend this university to siblings or friends as a good place to go to college.
4. The overall quality of academic programs at this university is excellent.
5. I feel as though I belong in the university community.

INTEGRATION

STUDENT ADAPTATION TO COLLEGE QUESTIONNAIRE

Participants indicate the applicability of each item on a 9-point scale with the anchors “applies very closely to me” and “doesn’t apply to me at all.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Applies Very Closely to Me</th>
<th>Doesn’t Apply to Me At All</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
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Academic Adjustment Subscale

5. I know why I’m in college and what I want out of it.
19. My academic goals and purpose are well defined.
23. Getting a college degree is very important to me.
32. Lately I have been having doubts regarding the value of a college education.
50. I am enjoying my academic work at college.
58. Most of the things I am interested in are not related to any of my course work at college.
3. I have been keeping up to date on my academic work.

17. I’m not working as hard as I should at my course work.

29. I really haven’t had much motivation for studying lately.

44. I am attending classes regularly.

6. I am finding academic work at college difficult.

10. I have not been functioning well during examinations.

13. I am satisfied with the level at which I am performing academically.

21. I’m not really smart enough for the academic work I am expected to be doing now.

25. I haven’t been very efficient in the use of study time lately.

27. I enjoy writing papers for courses.

39. Recently I have had trouble concentrating when I try to study.

41. I’m not doing well enough academically for the amount of work I put in.

52. I am having a lot of trouble getting started on homework assignments.

36. I am satisfied with the number and variety of courses available at college.

43. I am satisfied with the quality or the caliber of courses at college.

54. I am satisfied with my program of courses for this semester/quarter.

62. I am very satisfied with the professors I have now in my courses.

66. I’m quite satisfied with my academic situation at college.

Social Adjustment Subscale

1. I feel that I fit in well as a part of the college environment.

8. I am very involved with social activities in college.

9. I am adjusting well to college.

18. I have several close social ties at college.
37. I feel that I have enough social skills to get along well in the college setting.
46. I am satisfied with the extent to which I am participating in social activities at college
65. I am quite satisfied with my social life at college.

4. I am meeting as many people, and making as many friends as I would like at college.
14. I have had informal, personal contacts with college professors.

33. I am getting along very well with my roommate(s) at college. (Please omit if you do not have a roommate.)

42. I am having difficulty feeling at ease with other people at college.
48. I haven’t been mixing too well with the opposite sex lately.

56. I feel I am very different from other student at college in ways that I don’t like.

63. I have some good friends or acquaintances at college with whom I can talk about any problems I may have.

22. Lonesomeness for home is a source of difficulty for me now
51. I have been feeling lonely a lot at college lately.

57. On balance, I would rather be home than here.

16. I am pleased now about my decision to attend this college in particular.

26. I enjoy living in a college dormitory. (Please omit if you do not live in a dormitory; any university housing should be regarded as a dormitory.)

30. I am satisfied with the extracurricular activities available at college.

Personal-Emotional Adjustment Subscale

2. I have been feeling tense or nervous lately.
7. Lately I have been feeling blue and moody a lot.

12. Being on my own, taking responsibility for myself, has not been easy.
20. I haven’t been able to control my emotions very well lately.

31. I’ve given a lot of thought lately to whether I should ask for help from the
    Psychological/Counseling Services Center or from a psychotherapist outside of
    college.

38. I have been getting angry too easily lately.

45. Sometimes my thinking gets muddled up too easily.

49. I worry a lot about my college expenses.

64. I am experiencing a lot of difficulty coping with the stresses imposed upon me in
    college.

11. I have felt tired much of the time lately.

24. My appetite has been good lately.

28. I have been having a lot of headaches lately.

35. I’ve put on (or lost) too much weight recently.

40. I haven’t been sleeping very well.

55. I have been feeling in good health lately.

   Attachment Subscale

15. I am pleased now about my decision to go to college.

60. Lately I have been giving a lot of thought to dropping out of college altogether and
    for good.

61. I find myself giving considerable thought to taking time off from college and
    finishing later.

16. I am pleased now about my decision to attend this college in particular.

34. I wish I were at another college or university.
47. I expect to stay at this college for a bachelor’s degree.

59. Lately I have been giving a lot of thought to transferring to another college.
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Personal Information
Place of Birth Statesboro, GA

Education
EdS University of Kentucky, 2008
Counseling Psychology, Specialty: Counseling Traditionally Marginalized Populations
MS Eastern Kentucky University, 2006
Clinical Psychology
BA University of Kentucky 2004
Psychology and Sociology Minor

Professional Experience
APA-Approved Doctoral Internship; Johns Hopkins University
Counseling Center; Baltimore, MD
Aug. 2010-May 2012 On Call Crisis Counselor
Doctoral Practicum Placement (III); University of Kentucky Counseling Center and Residence Life; Lexington, KY
March 2011-Aug. 2011 Doctoral Part-time Staff Therapist
Doctoral Practicum Placement (V); University of Kentucky Counseling Center; Lexington, KY
*Kentucky Adult Education Practicum Supervisor*

Doctoral Practicum Placement (IV); University of Kentucky/Kentucky Adult Education

Aug. 2009-Aug. 2010  
*Doctoral Practicum Therapist*

Doctoral Practicum Placement (II); University of Kentucky Counseling Center; Lexington, KY

Aug. 2008-May 2009  
*Doctoral Practicum Intern Therapist*

Doctoral Practicum Placement (I); Berea College Counseling and Disability Services; Berea, KY

*School Counselor*

Education Specialist Professional Internship; Booker T. Washington Academy; Lexington, KY

Jan. 2006-Aug. 2006  
*Clinical Psychology Intern*

Master’s Level Clinical Internship; Lexington Fayette Urban County Government (LFUCG) and Comprehensive Care—Methadone Clinic; Lexington, KY

*Counselor and Group Leader*

Clinical Psychology Practicum (IV); Center for Women, Children, and Families (The Nest); Lexington, KY

May 2005-Aug. 2005  
*Group Therapy Co-Leader*

Clinical Psychology Practicum (III); Madison Manor Nursing Home; Richmond, KY
Jan. 2005-May. 2005  
*School Counselor*

Clinical Psychology Practicum (II); Mayfield Elementary School;
Richmond, KY

*Masters Clinical Therapist*

Clinical Psychology Practicum (I); Eastern Kentucky University
Psychology Clinic; Richmond, KY

March 2004-Aug. 2004  
*Program Coordinator/Therapeutic Aid Assistant*

Experiential Fieldwork Senior Internship; Visually Impaired Preschool
Services; Lexington, KY

*Mentor/Tutor and Group Counselor*

Senior Psychology Internship; The Chrysalis House; Lexington, KY

*Youth Worker/Counselor*

The Cleveland Home; Versailles, KY

**Scholastic and Professional Honors**

Aug. 2008-Present  
Southern Regional Education Board Doctoral Scholar Fellow; University of Kentucky

Aug. 2006-May 2008  
Lyman T. Johnson Graduate Fellow; University of Kentucky

Rodney Gross Academic Scholarship; Eastern Kentucky University

Jan. 2003-May 2004  
Dean’s List; University of Kentucky

Aug. 2000-May 2004  
William C. Parker Academic Scholarship; University of Kentucky
Professional Publications


La Toya Bianca Smith

March 14, 2014